

SERIOUS
POEMS
HOOD

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FRANCES A. YATES



HOOD'S SERIOUS POEMS

SERIOUS POEMS

BY

THOMAS HOOD



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“ Work ! work ! work !
While the cock is crowing aloof !
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof !
It's Oh ! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work !

“ Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim ;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim !
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream !

“ Oh, Men, with Sisters dear !
Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives !
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives !
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

“ But why do I talk of Death ?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep ;

O God ! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap !

“ Work—work—work !
My labour never flags ;
And what are its wages ? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shatter’d roof—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there !

“ Work—work—work !
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime !
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumb’d,
As well as the weary hand.

“ Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

“ Oh ! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,

For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal !

“ Oh ! but for one short hour !
A respite however brief !
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief !
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread ! ”

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch ! stitch ! stitch !
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich !—
She sang this “ Song of the Shirt ! ”



THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

ONE more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements ;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing ;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully ;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly ;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful ;
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,

Her fair auburn tresses ;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home ?

Who was her father ?
Who was her mother ?
Had she a sister ?
Had she a brother ?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other ?

Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun !
Oh ! it was pitiful !
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
Feelings had changed :
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence ;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver ;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river :
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Any where, any where
Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smoothe, and compose them ;
And her eyes, close them
Staring so blindly !

Dreadfully staring
Thro' muddy impurity,

As when with the daring
 Last look of despairing
 Fix'd on futurity.
 Perishing gloomily,
 Spurr'd by contumely,
 Cold inhumanity,
 Burning insanity,
 Into her rest.—
 Cross her hands humbly,
 As if praying dumbly,
 Over her breast !

Owning her weakness,
 Her evil behaviour,
 And leaving, with meekness,
 Her sins to her Saviour !



*THE PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER
 FAIRIES.*

TO CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank my literary fortune that I am not reduced, like many better wits, to barter dedications, for the hope or promise of patronage, with some nominally great man ; but that where true affection points, and honest respect, I am free to gratify my head and heart by a sincere inscription. An intimacy and dearness, worthy of a much earlier date than our acquaintance can refer to, direct me at once to your name : and with this acknowledgment of your ever kind feeling towards me, I desire to re-

cord a respect and admiration for you as a writer, which no one acquainted with our literature, save Elia himself, will think disproportionate or misplaced. If I had not these better reasons to govern me, I should be guided to the same selection by your intense yet critical relish for the works of our great Dramatist, and for that favourite play in particular which has furnished the subject of my verses.

It is my design, in the following poem, to celebrate, by an allegory, that immortality which Shakespeare has conferred on the fairy mythology by his "Midsummer Night's Dream." But for him those pretty children of our childhood would leave barely their names to our maturer years; they belong, as the mites upon the plum, to the bloom of fancy, a thing generally too frail and beautiful to withstand the rude handling of time: but the Poet has made this most perishable part of the mind's creation equal to the most enduring; he has so intertwined the elfins with human sympathies, and linked them by so many delightful associations with the productions of nature, that they are as real to the mind's eye as their green magical circles to the outer sense.

It would have been a pity for such a race to go extinct, even though they were but as the butterflies that hover about the leaves and blossoms of the visible world.

I am, my dear Friend, yours most truly,

T. HOOD.

I

'Twas in that mellow season of the year,
When the hot sun sings the yellow leaves
Till they be gold,—and with a broader sphere
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves;
When more abundantly the spider weaves,
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier clime;
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,

HOOD'S SERIOUS POEMS.



THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

'TWAS in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school :
There were some that ran and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,
And souls untouch'd by sin ;
To a level mead they came, and there
They drave the wickets in :
Pleasantly shone the setting sun
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran,—
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can ;
But the Usher sat remote from all
A melancholy man !

His hat was off, his vest apart,
To catch heaven's blessed breeze ;
For a burning thought was in his brow,
And his bosom ill at ease :
So he lean'd his head on his hands, and read
The book between his knees !

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,
Nor ever glanced aside,
For the peace of his soul he read that book
In the golden eventide :
Much study had made him very lean,
And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,
With a fast and fervent grasp
He strain'd the dusky covers close,
And fixed the brazen hasp :
" O God ! could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a clasp ! "

Then leaping on his feet upright,
Some moody turns he took,—
Now up the mead then down the mead,
And past a shady nook,—
And, lo ! he saw a little boy
That pored upon a book !

" My gentle lad, what is't you read—
Romance or fairy fable ?
Or is it some historic page,
Of kings and crowns unstable ? "
The young boy gave an upward glance,—
" It is ' The Death of Abel. ' "

The Usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain,—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again ;
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talk'd with him of Cain ;

And, long since then, of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves ;
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves ;
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves ;

And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod,—
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial clod ;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God !

He told how murderers walk the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain :
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain !

“ And well,” quoth he, “ I know, for truth,
Their pangs must be extreme,—
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—
Who spill life's sacred stream !
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought
A murder, in my dream !

“ One that had never done me wrong—
A feeble man, and old ;
I led him to a lonely field,—
The moon shone clear and cold :
Now here, said I, this man shall die,
And I will have his gold !

“ Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—
And then the deed was done :
There was nothing lying at my foot
But lifeless flesh and bone !

“ Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill ;
And yet I fear'd him all the more,
For lying there so still :
There was a manhood in his look,
That murder could not kill !

“ And, lo ! the universal air
Seem'd lit with ghastly flame ;—
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame :
I took the dead man by his hand,
And call'd upon his name !

“ O God ! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain !
But when I touched the lifeless clay,
The blood gush'd out amain !
For every clot, a burning spot
Was scorching in my brain !

“ My head was like an ardent coal,
My heart as solid ice ;
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,
Was at the Devil's price ;
A dozen times I groan'd ; the dead
Had never groan'd but twice !

“ And now, from forth the frowning sky,
From the heaven's topmost height,
I heard a voice—the awful voice
Of the blood-avenging Sprite :—
' Thou guilty man ! take up thy dead
And hide it from my sight ! '

“ I took the dreary body up,
And cast it in a stream,—
A sluggish water, black as ink,
The depth was so extreme :—
My gentle boy, remember this
Is nothing but a dream !

“ Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,
And vanish'd in the pool !
Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,
And wash'd my forehead cool,
And sat among the urchins young,
That evening in the school.

“ O Heaven ! to think of their white souls,
And mine so black and grim !
I could not share in childish prayer,
Nor join in Evening Hymn :
Like a Devil of the Pit I seem'd
'Mid holy cherubim !

“ And peace went with them, one and all,
And each calm pillow spread ;
But Guilt was my grim chamberlain
That lighted me to bed ;
And drew my midnight curtains round,
With fingers bloody red !

“ All night I lay in agony,
In anguish dark and deep ;
My fever'd eyes I dared not close,
But stared aghast at Sleep :
For Sin had render'd unto her
The keys of Hell to keep !

“ All night I lay in agony,
From weary chime to chime,
With one besetting horrid hint,
That rack'd me all the time ;
A mighty yearning, like the first
Fierce impulse unto crime !

“ One stern tyrannic thought, that made
All other thoughts its slave ;
Stronger and stronger every pulse
Did that temptation crave,—
Still urging me to go and see
The Dead Man in his grave !

“ Heavily I rose up, as soon
As light was in the sky,
And sought the black accursed pool
With a wild misgiving eye ;
And I saw the Dead in the river bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.

“ Merrily rose the lark, and shook
The dew-drop from its wing ;
But I never mark'd its morning flight,
I never heard it sing :
For I was stooping once again
Under the horrid thing.

“ With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
I took him up and ran ;—
There was no time to dig a grave
Before the day began :
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
I hid the murder'd man !

“ And all that day I read in school,
But my thought was other-where ;
As soon as the mid-day task was done,
In secret I was there :
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
And still the corse was bare !

“ Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
That earth refused to keep :
Or land or sea, though he should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

“ So wills the fierce avenging Sprite,
Till blood for blood atones !
Ay, though he's buried in a cave,
And trodden down with stones,
And years have rotted off his flesh,—
The world shall see his bones !

“ O God ! that horrid, horrid dream
Besets me now awake !
Again—again, with dizzy brain,
The human life I take ;
And my red right hand grows raging hot,
Like Cranmer's at the stake.

“ And still no peace for the restless clay,
Will wave or mould allow ;
The horrid thing pursues my soul,—
It stands before me now ! ”
The fearful Boy look'd up and saw
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep
The urchin eyelids kiss'd,
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
Through the cold and heavy mist ;
And Eugene Aram walk'd between,
With gyves upon his wrist.



THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.

WITH fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch ! stitch ! stitch !
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the “ Song of the Shirt.”

Touched with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their
prime.

II.

So that, wherever I addressed my way,
I seemed to track the melancholy feet
Of him that is the Father of Decay,
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet ;
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat
To some unwasted regions of my brain,
Charmed with the light of summer and the heat,
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,
And sprout fresh flowers in my own domain.

III.

It was a shady and sequestered scene,
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,
Planted with his own laurels evergreen,
And roses that for endless summer blow ;
And there were fountain springs to overflow
Their marble basins,—and cool green arcades
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades,—
With timid conies cropping the green blades.

IV.

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish,
Argent and gold ; and some of Tyrian skin,
Some crimson-barred ;—and ever at a wish
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom
Whilst others with fresh hues rowed forth to win

My changeable regard, for so we doom
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

V.

And there were many birds of many dyes,
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,
Besides some vocalists, without a name,
That oft on fairy errands come and go,
With accents magical ;—and all were tame,
And peckled at my hand where'er I came.

VI.

And for my sylvan company, in lieu
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,
Sat Queen Titania with her pretty crew,
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,
For she was gracious to my childish years,
And made me free of her enchanted round ;
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound.

VII.

" Ah me," she cries, " was ever moonlight seen
So clear and tender for our midnight trips?
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene
My lieges all !"—Away the goblin skips
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,

Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,
Like a frayed bird in the grey owlet's beak.

VIII.

And lo ! upon my fixed delighted ken
Appeared the loyal Fays.—Some by degrees
Crept from the primrose buds that opened then,
And some from bell-shaped blossoms like the bees.
Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,
Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass ;
Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
Dropped, like shed blossoms, silent to the grass,
Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

IX.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain ;
And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
Came, too, from distance, in her tiny wain,
Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy rain,
Then circling the bright Moon, had washed her car,
And still bedewed it with a various stain :
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

X.

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,
Was absent, whether some distempered spleen
Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been
Sometime obnoxious) kept him from his queen,

And made her now peruse the starry skies
Prophetical with such an absent mien ;
Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,
And oft the moon was incensed with her sighs—

XI.

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon
Their hushing dances languished to a stand,
Like midnight leaves when, as the Zephyrs swoon,
All on their drooping stems they sink unfanned—
So into silence drooped the fairy band,
To see their empress dear so pale and still,
Crowding her softly round on either hand,
As pale as frosty snowdrops, and as chill,
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

XII.

“Alas,” quoth she, “ye know our fairy lives
Are leased upon the fickle faith of men ;
Not measured out against fate’s mortal knives,
Like human gossamers, we perish when
We fade, and are forgot in worldly ken,—
Though poesy has thus prolonged our date,
Thanks be to the sweet Bard’s auspicious pen
That rescued us so long !—howbeit of late
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

XIII.

“And this dull day my melancholy sleep
Hath been so thronged with images of woe,
That even now I cannot choose but weep
To think this was some sad prophetic show
Of future horror to befall us so,—

Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—
Yea, our poor empire's fall and overthrow,—
For this was my long vision's dreadful stress,
And when I waked my trouble was not less.

XIV.

“ Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,
Such leaden weight dragged these Icarian wings,
My faithless wand was wavering and weak,
And slimy toads had trespassed in our rings—
The birds refused to sing for me—all things—
Disowned their old allegiance to our spells ;
The rude bees pricked me with their rebel stings ;
And, when I passed, the valley-lily's bells
Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.

XV.

“ And ever on the faint and flagging air
A doleful spirit with a dreary note
Cried in my fearful ear, ‘ Prepare ! prepare ! ’
Which soon I knew came from a raven's throat,
Perched on a cypress bough not far remote, —
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,
That alway cometh with his soot-black coat
To make hearts dreary :—for he is a blot
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot !

XVI.

“ Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,
With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit
Startled me all aheap !—and soon I saw
The horridest shape that ever raised my awe,—

A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,
With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,
And this was sure the deadliest of them all !

XVII.

“ Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown ;
So from his barren poll one hoary lock
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,
Well-nigh to where his frosty brows did frown
Like jagged icicles at cottage eaves ;
And for his coronal he wore some brown
And bristled ears gathered from Ceres’ sheaves,
Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.

XVIII.

“ And lo ! upon a mast reared far aloft,
He bore a very bright and crescent blade,
The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,
In meditative spite, that, sore dismayed,
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade ;
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by :
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made
The trembling birds betake them to the sky,
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.

XIX.

“ And ever as he sighed, his foggy breath
Blurred out the landscape like a flight of smoke :
Thence knew I this was either dreary Death
Or Time, who leads all creatures to his stroke.
Ah wretched me ! ”—Here, even as she spoke,

The melancholy Shape came gliding in,
And leaned his back against an antique oak,
Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin,
They scarce were seen against the Dryad's skin.

XX.

Then what a fear seized all the little rout !
Look how a flock of panicked sheep will stare—
And huddle close—and start—and wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—
So did that sudden Apparition scare
All close aheap those small affrighted things ;
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings ;
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings ?

XXI.

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear
And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,
Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges dear :
“ Alas ! ” quoth she, “ is there no nodding wheat
Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet, —
Or withered leaves to ravish from the tree, —
Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat ?
Think but what vaunting monuments there be
Built in spite and mockery of thee.

XXII.

“ Oh fret away the fabric walls of Fame,
And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust :
Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each high name,
And waste old armours of renown with rust :
Do all of this, and thy revenge is just :

Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,
And check Ambition's overweening lust,
That dares exterminating war with Time,—
But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

XXIII.

“ Frail feeble sprites!—the children of a dream!
Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,
Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,
Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing
 then ;—
So do we flutter in the glance of youth
And fervid fancy,—and so perish when
The eye of faith grows aged ;—in sad truth,
Feeling thy sway, O Time! though not thy tooth !

XXIV

“ Where be those old divinities forlorn,
That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?
Alas! their memories are dimmed and torn,
Like the remaining tatters of a dream:
So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem ;—
For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,
That holds the wastes of every human scheme.
Oh spare us, then,—and these our pretty elves,
We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves ! ”

XXV.

Now, as she ended, with a sigh, to name
Those old Olympians, scattered by the whirl
Of fortune's giddy wheel and brought to shame,
Methought a scornful and malignant curl

Showed on the lips of that malicious churl,
To think what noble havocs he had made ;
So that I feared he all at once would hurl
The harmless fairies into endless shade,—
Howbeit he stopped awhile to whet his blade.

XXVI.

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail,
Rise up in concert from their mingled dread ;
Pity it was to see them all so pale,
Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed
But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,
That hung between two branches of a briar,
And 'gan to swing and gambol heels o'er head,
Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,
For him no present grief could long inspire.

XXVII.

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,
Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,
Bedews a pathway from her throne ; and stops
Before the foot of her arch enemy,
And with her little arms enfolds his knee,
That shows more grisly from that fair embrace ;
But she will ne'er depart. " Alas ! " quoth she,
" My painful fingers I will here enlace
Till I have gained your pity for our race.

XXVIII.

" What have we ever done to earn this grudge,
And hate—(if not too humble for thy hating?)—
Look o'er our labours and our lives, and judge
If there be any ills of our creating :

For we are very kindly creatures, dating
With nature's charities still sweet and bland :
O think this murder worthy of debating ! "
Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,
To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

XXIX.

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,
Clad all in white like any chorister,
Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings,
That made soft music at each little stir,
But something louder than a bee's demur
Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,
And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—
And O his voice was sweet, touched with the gloom
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom !

XXX.

Quoth he, " We make all melodies our care,
That no false discords may offend the Sun,
Music's great master—tuning everywhere
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one
Duly to place and season, so that none
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn
The shrill sweet lark ; and when the day is done,
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.

XXXI.

" We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,
That make a chorus with their single note ;
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place
That duly they may get their tunes by rote ;

And oft, like echoes, answering remote,
We hide in thickets from the feathered throng,
And strain in rivalry each throbbing throat,
Singing in shrill responses all day long,
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

XXXII.

“Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love
The raining music from a morning cloud,
When vanished larks are carolling above,
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud ;
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell
Whene’er thou listenest to Philomel.”

XXXIII.

Then Saturn thus :—“Sweet is the merry lark,
That carols in man’s ear so clear and strong ;
And youth must love to listen in the dark
That tuneful elegy of Tereus’ wrong ;
But I have heard that ancient strain too long,
For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,
And I grow weary for some newer song ;
For wherefore had I wings, unless to range
Through all things mutable from change to change ?

XXXIV.

“But wouldst thou hear the melodies of Time,
Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll
Over hushed cities, and the midnight chime
Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll

Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,
Saying, Time shall be final of all things,
Whose fate, last voice must elegize the whole,—
O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,
And make the wide air tremble while it rings !”

XXXV.

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,
Saying, “ We be the handmaids of the Spring,
In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,
Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.
We tend upon buds' birth and blossoming,
And count the leafy tributes that they owe—
As, so much to the earth—so much to fling
In showers to the brook—so much to go
In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.

XXXVI.

“ The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green ;
Pansies, and those veiled nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen ;
And golden daffodils, plucked for May's Queen ;
And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath ;
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
Whose tuneful voice, turned fragrance in his breath,
Kissed by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

XXXVII.

“ The widowed primrose weeping to the moon,
And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright
A cool libation hoarded for the noon
Is kept—and she that purifies the light,

The virgin Lily, faithful to her white,
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame ;
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's spright,
Our very godchild, by whatever name—
Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the same !”

XXXVIII.

Then that old Mower stamped his heel, and struck
His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,
Saying, “ Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck
With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crowned
With flow'ry chaplets, save when they are found
Withered?—Whenever have I plucked a rose,
Except to scatter its vain leaves around?
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,
And bring decay on every flower that blows.

XXXIX.

“ Or when am I so wroth as when I view
The wanton pride of Summer ;—how she decks
The birthday world with blossoms ever new,
As if Time had not lived, and heaped great wrecks
Of years on years?—O then I bravely vex
And catch the gay months in their gaudy plight,
And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,
And raise great trophies to my ancient might.”

XL.

Then saith another, “ We are kindly things,
And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—
Witness these hearts embroidered on our wings,
To show our constant patronage of love :—

We sit at even, in sweet bowers above
Lovers, and shake rich odours on the air,
To mingle with their sighs ; and still remove
The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

XLI.

“ And we are near the mother when she sits
Beside her infant in its wicker bed ;
And we are in the fairy scene that flits
Across its tender brain : sweet dreams we shed,
And whilst the tender little soul is fled
Away, to sport with our young elves, the while
We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,
So that their careful parents they beguile.

XLII.

“ O then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow
At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise
Crushed the dear curl on a regardful brow
That did not frown thee from thy honey prize—
If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within
To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,
Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,
For Love's dear sake, let us thy pity win ! ”

XLIII.

Then Saturn, fiercely thus :—“ What joy have I
In tender babes, that have devoured mine own,
Whenever to the light I heard them cry,
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone ?

Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,
In monstrous dints of my enormous tooth ;
And,—but the peopled world is too full-grown
For hunger's edge—I would consume all youth
At one great meal, without delay or ruth !

XLIV.

“ For I am well-nigh crazed and wild to hear
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,
Saying, We shall not die nor disappear,
But in these other selves ourselves succeed,
Even as ripe flowers pass into their seed
Only to be renewed from prime to prime,
All of which boastings I am forced to read,
Besides a thousand challenges to Time
Which bragging lovers have compiled in rhyme.

XLV.

“ Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o' nights,
There will I steal, and with my hurried hand
Startle them suddenly from their delights
Before the next encounter hath been planned,
Ravishing hours in little minutes spanned ;
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my dart,
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart.”

XLVI.

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in green,
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly stood
Each at his proper ease, as they had been
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,

And wore the livery of Robin Hood,
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—
So came this chief right frankly, and made good
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn's cup :—

XLVII.

“ We be small foresters and gay, who tend
On trees, and all their furniture of green,
Training the young boughs airily to bend,
And show blue snatches of the sky between ;
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen
Birds' crafty dwellings as may hide them best
But most the timid blackbird's—she, that seen,
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.

XLVIII.

“ We bend each tree in proper attitude,
And fountain willows train in silvery falls ;
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,
And verdant aisles leading to Dryads' halls,
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls ;—
We shape all plummy trees against the sky,
And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,
Men say the tapping woodpecker is nigh.

XLIX.

“ Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow cell,
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees' rind,
That haply some lone musing wight may spell
Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—

Or chastest Laura,—sweetly called to mind
In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down ;
And sometimes we enrich grey stems with twined
And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose brown
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.

L.

“ And, lastly, for mirth’s sake and Christmas cheer,
We bear the seedling berries, for increase,
To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,
Careful that mistletoe may never cease ;
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace
Of sombre forests, or to see light break
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release
Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad’s sake.”

LI.

Then Saturn, with a frown :—“ Go forth, and fell
Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell
To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky
Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy
The next green generation of the tree ;
But hence with the dead leaves, whene’er they fly,—
Which in the bleak air I would rather see,
Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be.

LII.

“ For I dislike all prime and verdant pets,
Ivy except, that on the aged wall
Preys with its worm-like roots, and daily frets
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,

King-like, worn down by its own coronal :
 Neither in forest haunts love I to won,
 Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,
 And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves
 on,
 Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.

LIII.

“ For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,
 Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs ;
 And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,
 Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes ;
 But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,
 And must be courted with the gauds of spring ;
 Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap, and cries
 What shall we always do, but love and sing?—
 And Time is reckoned a discarded thing.”

LIV.

Here in my dream it made me fret to see
 How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while
 Had blithely jested with calamity,
 With mistimed mirth mocking the doleful style
 Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile
 To see him so reflect their grief aside,
 Turning their solemn looks to half a smile—
 Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide ;
 But soon a novel advocate I spied.

LV.

Quoth he— “ We teach all natures to fulfil
 Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—
 The bee's sweet alchemy,—the spider's skill,—
 The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—

And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—
The lapwing's cunning to preserve her nest,—
But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet
And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,
Its tender pity of poor babes distressed.

LVI.

“ Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins
Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves
From our example : so the spider spins,
And eke the silkworm, patterned by ourselves :
Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves
Of early bees, and busy toils commence,
Watched of wise men, that know not we are elves,
But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense,
And praise our human-like intelligence.

LVII.

“ Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,
And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,
What time the leaves are scattered by the gale,
Mindful of that old forest burying ;
As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,
For whom our craft most curiously contrives,
If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,
To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,
And we will pay the ransom in full hives.”

LVIII.

“ Now by my glass,” quoth Time, “ ye do offend
In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,
And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,
But they lay up for need a timely store,

And travail with the seasons evermore ;
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath passed away,
And none but I can tell what hide he wore ;
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,
In riddling wonder his great bones survey."

LIX.

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun
Hath all embroidered with its crooked gold,
It was so quaintly wrought, and overrun
With spangled trceries,—most meet for one
That was a warden of the pearly streams ;
And as he stepped out of the shadows dun,
His jewels sparkled in the pale moon's gleams,
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

LX.

Quoth he,—“ We bear the gold and silver keys
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below
Course thro' the veiny earth,—which when they
freeze
Into hard chrysolites, we bid to flow,
Creeping like subtle snakes, when as they go,
We guide their windings to melodious falls,
At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and low,
Poets have turned their smoothest madrigals,
To sing to ladies in their banquet halls.

LXI.

“ And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat
Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn
Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn,

And languid fish, unpoised, grow sick and yearn,—
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,
And little channels dig, wherein we turn
The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

LXII.

“Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,
With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—
In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—
And all reflections in a streamlet made,
Haply of thy own love, that, disarrayed,
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—
By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,
And winking stars reduplicate at night,
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight.”

LXIII.

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks
Moved not the spiteful Shade :—Quoth he, “Your
taste
Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks
And slavish rivulets that run to waste
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste
To swell the vast dominion of the sea,
In whose great presence I am held disgraced,
And neighboured with a king that rivals me
In ancient might and hoary majesty.

LXIV.

“Whereas I ruled in Chaos, and still keep
The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,
Before the briny fountains of the deep
Brimmed up the hollow cavities of earth ;

I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,
Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,
And infant Titans of enormous girth,
Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks,
Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.

LXV.

“Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,
That scared the world?—By this sharp scythe they
fell,
And half the sky was curdled with their blood
So have all primal giants sighed farewell.
No Wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,
No pearly Naiads. All their days are done
That strove with Time, untimely, to excel;
Wherefore I razed their progenies, and none
But my great shadow intercepts the sun!”

LXVI.

Then saith the timid Fay—“O mighty Time!
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans’ fall,
For they were stained with many a bloody crime:
Great giants work great wrongs—but we are small,
For love goes lowly;—but Oppression’s tall,
And with surpassing strides goes foremost still
Where love indeed can hardly reach at all;
Like a poor dwarf o’erburdened with goodwill,
That labours to efface the tracks of ill.

LXVII.

“Man even strives with Man, but we eschew
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor;
Nay, we are gentle as sweet heaven’s dew,
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,

Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite ;
For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,
But only when all love hath taken flight,
And youth's warm gracious heart is hardened
quite.

LXVIII.

“ So are our gentle natures intertwined
With sweet humanities, and closely knit
In kindly sympathy with human kind.
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,
All hopeless maids and lovers—nor omit
Magical succours unto hearts forlorn :
We charm man's life, and do not perish it ;
So judge us by the helps we showed this morn,
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

LXIX.

’Twas nigh sweet Amwell ;—for the Queen had
tasked
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet basked ;
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see
Planted in mossgrown rushes to the knee,
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim ;
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

LXX.

“ His face was ashy pale, and leaden care
Had sunk the levelled arches of his brow,
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to fare
Over those melancholy springs and slow,

That from his piteous eyes began to flow,
And fell anon into the chilly stream ;
Which, as his mimicked image showed below,
Wrinkled his face with many a needless seam,
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.

LXXI.

“ And lo ! upon the air we saw him stretch
His passionate arms ; and, in a wayward strain,
He 'gan to elegize that fellow wretch
That with mute gestures answered him again,
Saying, ‘ Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain
Life's sad weak captive in a prison strong,
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong ?
Thou wear'st that mortal livery too long ! ’

LXXII.

“ This, with more spleenful speeches and some tears,
When he had spent upon the imaged wave,
Speedily I convened my elfin peers
Under the lily-cups, that we might save
This woful mortal from a wilful grave
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,
Seeing he was mere melancholy's slave,
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,
And straight was tangled in her secret net.

LXXIII.

“ Therefore, as still he watched the water's flow,
Daintily we transformed, and with bright fins
Came glancing through the gloom ; some from
below
Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,

Snatching the light upon their purple skins ;
Then under the broad leaves made slow retire :
One like a golden galley bravely wins
Its radiant course—another glows like fire—
Making that wayward man our pranks admire.

LXXIV.

“ And so he banished thought, and quite forgot
All contemplation of that wretched face ;
And so we wiled him from that lonely spot
Along the river's brink ; till by heaven's grace,
He met a gentle haunter of the place,
Full of sweet wisdom gathered from the brooks,
Who there discussed his melancholy case
With wholesome texts learned from kind Nature's
books,
Meanwhile he newly trimmed his lines and hooks.”

LXXV.

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now—
“ Let me remember how I saved a man,
Whose fatal noose was fastened on a bough,
Intended to abridge his sad life's span ;
For haply I was by when he began
His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,
And overheard his melancholy plan,
How he had made a vow to end his days,
And therefore followed him in all his ways.

LXXVI.

“ Through brake and tangled copse, for much he
loathed
All populous haunts, and roamed in forests rude,

To hide himself from man. But I had clothed
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued,
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,
Till we were come beside an ancient tree
Late blasted by a storm. Here he renewed
His loud complaints—choosing that spot to be
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

LXXVII.

“ It was a wild and melancholy glen,
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,
Pushed through the rotten sod for fear’s remark ;
A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,
With many blasted oaks mossgrown and grey.

LXXVIII.

“ But here upon his final desperate clause
Suddenly I pronounced so sweet a strain,
Like a panged nightingale, it made him pause,
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,
The sad remainder oozing from his brain
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,
Which through his ardent eyes began to drain—
Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclosed their shears :
So pity me and all my fated peers ! ”

LXXIX.

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hushed :
When with the hoary Shape a fresh tongue pleads,
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blushed
To read the record of her own good deeds :—

“It chanced,” quoth she, “in seeking through the meads

For honeyed cowslips, sweetest in the morn,
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads,
And Echo answered to the huntsman’s horn,
We found a babe left in the swarths forlorn.

LXXX.

“A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting ;
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring ;
And too soon banished from a mother’s petting,
To churlish nurture and the wide world’s fretting,
For alien pity and unnatural care ;
Alas ! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

LXXXI.

“His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipped shell ;
And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
But quickly rolled themselves to pearls, and fell,
Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
Or haply wandered to the dimpled well,
Which love beside his mouth had sweetly planned,
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

LXXXII.

“Pity it was to see those frequent tears
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes ;
There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
As any mother’s heart might leap to prize ;

Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
Softened betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild ;
Just touched with thought, and yet not over wise,
They showed the gentle spirit of a child,
Not yet by care or any craft defiled.

LXXXIII.

“ Pity it was to see the ardent sun
Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so warm ;
For kindly shade or shelter he had none,
Nor mother’s gentle breast, come fair or storm.
Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform
Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,
All round the infant noisily we swarm,
Haply some passing rustic to advise—
Whilst providential Heaven our care espies.

LXXXIV.

“ And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,
Who, wondering at our loud unusual note,
Strays curiously aside, and so doth find
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,
And laps the foundling in his russet coat,
Who thence was nurtured in his kindly cot :
But how he prospered let proud London quote,
How wise, how rich, and how renowned he got,
And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

LXXXV.

“ Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,
Whose holds were fraught with costly merchan-
dize—
Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames,
And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies :

Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,
The mart of merchants from the East and West ;
Whose slender summit, pointing to the skies,
Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—

LXXXVI.

“ The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,
Inspirited with dew to leap and sing :
So let us also live, eternal King !
Partakers of the green and pleasant earth :
Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth :
Enough there is of joy's decrease and dearth !

LXXXVII.

“ Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty,
Perished and gone, and hasting to decay ;
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty
Or spite it is to havoc and to slay :
Too many a lovely race razed quite away,
Hath left large gaps in life and human loving :
Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, re-
proving
Thy desolating hand for our removing.”

LXXXVIII.

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,
And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck
Grappling with Time, who clutched him like a fly,
Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck !

He, whilst his fellows grieved, poor wight, had
stuck

His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,
And now his ear, and now his beard, would pluck ;
Whereas the angry churl had snatched him now,
Crying, "Thou impish mischief, who art thou?"

LXXXIX.

"Alas!" quoth Puck, "a little random elf,
Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,
For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,
But for no other purpose, worth, or need ;
And yet withal of a most happy breed ;
And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,
My partner dear in many a prankish deed
To make Dame Laughter hold her jolly sides,
Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

XC.

"'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,
Till e'en the patient man breathes half a curse ;
We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,
And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,
Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse :
And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,
We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse ;
But any graver purpose to fulfil,
We have not wit enough, and scarce the will.

XCI.

"We never let the canker melancholy
To gather on our faces like a rust,
But gloss our features with some change of folly,
Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,

But only sorrowing when sorrow must :
We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,
But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust
To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood
Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

XCII.

“ Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,
Who gloze her lively universal law,
As if she had not formed our cheerful feature
To be so tickled with the slightest straw !
So let them vex their mumping mouths, and draw
The corners downward, like a wat'ry moon,
And deal in gusty sighs, and rainy flaw—
We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
Or nurse November on the lap of June.

XCIII.

“ For ours are winging sprites, like any bird,
That shun all stagnant settlements of grief ;
And even in our rest our hearts are stirred,
Like insects settled on a dancing leaf :
This is our small philosophy in brief,
Which thus to teach hath set me all agape :
But dost thou relish it ? O hoary chief !
Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my nape,
And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape.”

XCIV.

Then Saturn thus—shaking his crooked blade
O'erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash
In all the fairies' eyes, dismally frayed !
His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash—
Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash :—

“Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing !
Whom nought can frighten, sadden, or abash,—
To hope my solemn countenance to wring
To idiot smiles !—but I will prune thy wing !

XCV.

“Lo ! this most awful handle of my scythe
Stood once a Maypole, with a flowery crown
Which rustics danced around, and maidens blithe,
To wanton pipings ;—but I plucked it down,
And robed the May Queen in a churchyard gown,
Turning her buds to rosemary and rue ;
And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,
And laid each lusty leaper in the dew ;
So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew !

XCVI.

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch
His mortal engine with each grisly hand,
Which frights the elfin progeny so much,
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand
All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,
With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe !
Meanwhile, some moving argument I planned,
To make the stern Shade merciful,—when lo !
He drops his fatal scythe without a blow !

XCVII.

For, just at need, a timely Apparition *
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt ;
Making him change his horrible position,
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,
That dares Time's irresistible affront,

* Shakspeare.

Whose strokes have scarred even the gods of old ;
Whereas this seemed a mortal, at mere hunt
For coneys, lighted by the moonshine cold,
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

XCVIII.

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,
And holds her beauty for awhile in gaze,
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap ;
And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,
As if in question of this magic chance,
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap ;
And then upon old Saturn turns askance,
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance :—

XCIX.

“ Oh, these be Fancy's revellers by night !
Stealthy companions of the downy moth—
Diana's motes, that flit in her pale light,
Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth ;
These be the feasters on night's silver cloth,—
The gnat with shrilly trump is their covener,
Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,
With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,
Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

C.

“ These be the pretty genii of the flow'rs,
Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—
Midsummer's phantoms in her dreamy hours,
King Oberon, and all his merry crew,
The darling puppets of romance's view ;

Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,
Famous for patronage of lovers true ;
No harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,
So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal them."

CI.

O what a cry was Saturn's then !—it made
The fairies quake. " What care I for their pranks,
However they may lovers choose to aid,
Or dance their roundelays on flow'ry banks?
Long must they dance before they earn my
thanks,—
So step aside, to some far safer spot,
Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,
And leave them in the sun, like weeds to rot,
And with the next day's sun to be forgot."

CII.

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen ;
But still the gracious Shade disarmed his aim,
Stepping with brave alacrity between,
And made his sere arm powerless and tame.
His be perpetual glory, for the shame
Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat !
But I must tell, how here Titania came
With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat
His kindly succour, in sad tones, but sweet.

CIII.

Saying, " Thou seest a wretched queen before thee,
The fading power of a failing land,
Who for her kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,
Now menaced by this tyrant's spoiling hand ;
No one but thee can hopefully withstand

That crooked blade he longeth so to lift.
I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand,
Which only times all ruins by its drift,
Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

CIV.

“Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,
That hangs upon his bald and barren crown ;
And we will sink to see him so rebuffed,
And lend our little mights to pull him down,
And make brave sport of his malicious frown,
For all his boastful mockery o’er men ;
For thou wast born I know for this renown,
By my most magical and inward ken,
That readeth ev’n at Fate’s forestalling pen.

CV.

“Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,
And by thy brow’s most fair and ample span,
Thought’s glorious palace, framed for fancies high,
And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,
I know the signs of an immortal man,—
Nature’s chief darling, and illustrious mate
Destined to foil old Death’s oblivious plan,
And shine untarnished by the fogs of Fate,
Time’s famous rival till the final date !

CVI.

“O shield us then from this usurping Time,
And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams ;
And teach thee tunes to wed unto thy rhyme,
And dance about thee in all midnight gleams,
Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,

Such as no mortal's eye hath even seen :
And, for thy love to us in our extremes,
Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,
Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been !

CVII.

" And we'll distil thee aromatic dew,
To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flow'rs ;
And flavoured syrups in thy drinks infuse,
And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bow'rs.
And with our games divert thy weariest hours,
With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.
And, this churl dead, there'll be no hasting hours
To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies : " —
Here she was stopped by Saturn's furious cries.

CVIII.

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,
Saying, " Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop
Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,
Or make th' autumnal flowers turn pale, and droop ;
Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop
Under fat sheaves—or blast the piny grove ;
But here thou shalt not harm this pretty group,
Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,
But leased on Nature's loveliness and love.

CIX.

" 'Tis these that free the small entangled fly,
Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty snare ;
These be the petty surgeons that apply
The healing balsams to the wounded hare,
Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care !

These be providers for the orphan brood,
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,
Quitting with gaping bill her darling's food,
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

CX.

" 'Tis these befriend the timid trembling stag,
When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,
He feels his saving speed begin to flag ;
For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,
And prompt fresh shifts in his alarumed ears,
So piteously they view all bloody morts ;
Or if the gunner, with his arm, appears,
Like noisy pies and jays, with harsh reports,
They warn the wildfowl of his deadly sports.

CXI.

" For these are kindly ministers of Nature,
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress ;
Pretty they be, and very small of stature—
For mercy still consorts with littleness ;
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,
And mischief grossest in this world of wrong ;
So do these charitable dwarfs redress
The tenfold ravages of giants strong,
To whom great malice and great might belong.

CXII.

" Likewise to them are Poets much beholden
For secret favours in the midnight glooms ;
Brave Spenser quaffed out of their goblets golden,
And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms,
And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms

Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,
Like humming bees busy about the brooms—
And glanced this fair queen's witchery full oft,
And in her magic wain soared far aloft.

CXIII.

“Nay I myself, though mortal, once was nursed
By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,
And in my childish ear glib Mab rehearsed
Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,
Telling me wonders of the moon and earth ;
My gramarye at her grave lap I conned,
Where Puck hath been convened to make me
 mirth ;
I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,
And toyed with Oberon's permitted wand.

CXIV.

“With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed
 me,
And delicate cates after my sunset meal,
And took me by my childish hand, and led me
By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,
Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,
Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes :
And when the West sparkled at Phœbus' wheel,
With fairy euphrasy they purged mine eyes,
To let me see their cities in the skies.

CXV.

“'Twas they first schooled my young imagination,
To take its flights like any new-fledged bird,
And showed the span of wingèd meditation

Stretched wider than things grossly seen or heard,
With sweet swift Ariel how I soared and stirred
The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow'rs !
'Twas they endeared what I have still preferred,
Nature's blest attributes and balmy pow'rs,
Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and
flow'rs !

CXVI.

“ Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty
Will I regard them in my honouring rhyme,
With love for love, and homages to beauty,
And magic thoughts gathered in night's cool clime,
With studious verse trancing the dragon Time
Strong as old Merlin's necromantic spells,
So these dear monarchs of the summer's prime
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery cells.

CXVII.

Look how a poisoned man turns livid black,
Drugged with a cup of deadly hellebore,
That sets his horrid features all at rack,—
So seemed these words into the ear to pour
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,
Wherewith his grisly arm he raised once more,
And bade the clustered sinews all engage,
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

CXVIII.

Whereas the blade flashed on the dinted ground,
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar
On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound ;

But Time was long benumbed, and stood ajar,
And then with baffled rage took flight afar,
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,
Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

CXIX.

Howbeit he vanished in the forest shade,
Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,
And, like Narcissus, to a sound decayed ;
Meanwhile the fays clustered the gracious Bard,
The darling centre of their dear regard :
Besides of sundry dances on the green,
Never was mortal man so brightly starred,
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.
“ Nod to him, Elves ! ” cries the melodious queen.

CXX.

“ Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him.
And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,
And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,
The silkworm now had spun our dreary shroud ;
But he hath all dispersed death's tearful cloud,
And Time's dread effigy scared quite away :
Bow to him then, as though to me ye bowed,
And his dear wishes prosper and obey
Wherever love and wit can find a way !

CXXI.

“ Noint him with fairy dewes of magic savours,
Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,
Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favours,
Plant in his walks the purple violet,

And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,
To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine
And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget
Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,
To vie the thoughts about his brow benign !

CXXII.

“ Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,
But tell them all how mild he is of heart,
Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near him,
And eke the dappled does, yet never start ;
Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,
Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,
Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart ;
But bid the sacred swallow haunt his eaves,
To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

CXXIII.

“ Or when he goes the nimble squirrel's visitor,
Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,
For, tell him, this is Nature's kind Inquisitor,—
Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience
shuts,
For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts ;
Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,
However he may watch their straw-built huts ;
So let him learn the crafts of all small things,
Which he will hint most aptly when he sings.”

CXXIV.

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand
Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head ;
Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,
Wears still the glory which her waving shed,

Such as erst crowned the old Apostle's head,
 To show the thoughts there harboured were divine,
 And on immortal contemplations fed :
 Goodly it was to see that glory shine
 Around a brow so lofty and benign !

CXXV.

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood
 Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,
 That had their mortal enemy withstood,
 And stayed their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.
 Long while this strife engaged the pretty band ;
 But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,
 Challenged the dawn creeping o'er eastern land,
 And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,
 Which sounds the knell of every elfish charm.

CXXVI.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise
 From plashy mead and undiscovered stream,
 Earth's morning incense to the early skies,
 Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.
 Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme—
 A shapeless Shade, that fancy disavowed,
 And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.
 Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,
 Like flocking linnets, vanished in a cloud.



HERO AND LEANDER.

DEDICATED TO S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

It is not with a hope my feeble praise
Can add one moment's honour to thine own,
That with thy mighty name I grace these lays ;
I seek to glorify myself alone :
For that same precious favour thou hast shown
To my endeavour in a bygone time,
And by this token, I would have it known
Thou art my friend, and friendly to my rhyme !
It is my dear ambition now to climb
Still higher in my thought—if my bold pen
May thrust on contemplations more sublime.
But I am thirsty for thy praise, for when
We gain applauses from the great in name,
We seem to be partakers of *their* fame.

I.

O Bards of old ! what sorrows have ye sung,
And tragic stories, chronicled in stone—
Sad Philomel restored her ravished tongue,
And transformed Niobe in dumbness shown ;
Sweet Sappho on her love for ever calls,
And Hero on the drowned Leander falls !

II.

Was it that spectacles of sadder plights,
Should make our blisses relish the more high ?
Then all fair dames, and maidens, and true
knights,
Whose flourished fortunes prosper in Love's eye,
Weep here, unto a tale of ancient grief,
Traced from the course of an old bas-relief.

III.

There stands Abydos !—here is Sestos' steep,
Hard by the gusty margin of the sea,
Where sprinkling waves continually do leap ;
And that is where those famous lovers be,
A builded gloom shot up into the grey,
As if the first tall watch-tow'r of the day.

IV.

Lo ! how the lark soars upward and is gone ;
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky,
His voice is heard, though body there is none,
And rain-like music scatters from on high ;
But Love would follow with a falcon spite,
To pluck the minstrel from his dewy height.

V.

For Love hath framed a ditty of regrets,
Tuned to the hollow sobbings on the shore,
A vexing sense, that with like music frets,
And chimes this dismal burthen o'er and o'er,
Saying, Leander's joys are past and spent,
Like stars extinguished in the firmament.

VI.

For ere the golden crevices of morn
Let in those regal luxuries of light,
Which all the variable east adorn,
And hang rich fringes on the skirts of night,
Leander, weaning from sweet Hero's side,
Must leave a widow where he found a bride.

VII.

Hark ! how the billows beat upon the sand !
Like pawing steeds impatient of delay ;

Meanwhile their rider, ling'ring on the land,
Dallies with love, and holds farewell at bay
A too short span. How tedious slow is grief !
But parting renders time both sad and brief.

VIII.

" Alas (he sighed), that this first glimpsing light,
Which makes the wide world tenderly appear,
Should be the burning signal for my flight,
From all the world's best image, which is here ;
Whose very shadow, in my fond compare,
Shines far more bright than Beauty's self else-
where."

IX.

Their cheeks are white as blossoms of the dark,
Whose leaves close up and show the outward pale,
And those fair mirrors where their joys did spark,
All dim and tarnished with a dreary veil,
No more to kindle till the night's return,
Like stars replenished at Joy's golden urn.

X.

Ev'n thus they creep into the spectral grey,
That cramps the landscape in its narrow brim,
As when two shadows by old Lethe stray,
He clasping her, and she entwining him ;
Like trees wind-parted that embrace anon,
True love so often goes before 'tis gone.

XI.

For what rich merchant but will pause in fear,
To trust his wealth to the unsafe abyss ?
So Hero dotes upon her treasure here,
And sums the loss with many an anxious kiss,

Whilst her fond eyes grow dizzy in her head,
Fear aggravating fear with shows of dread.

XII.

She thinks how many have been sunk and
drowned,
And spies their snow-white bones below the deep,
Then calls huge congregated monsters round,
And plants a rock wherever he would leap ;
Anon she dwells on a fantastic dream,
Which she interprets of that fatal stream.

XIII.

Saying, " That honeyed fly I saw was thee,
Which lighted on a water-lily's cup,
When, lo ! the flow'r, enamoured of my bee,
Closed on him suddenly and locked him up,
And he was smothered in her drenching dew ;
Therefore this day thy drowning I shall rue."

XIV.

But next, remembering her virgin fame,
She clips him in her arms and bids him go,
But seeing him break loose, repents her shame,
And plucks him back upon her bosom's snow ;
And tears unfix her iced resolve again,
As steadfast frosts are thawed by showers of rain.

XV.

O for a type of parting ! Love to love
Is like the fond attraction of two spheres,
Which needs a godlike effort to remove,
And then sink down their sunny atmospheres,
In rain and darkness on each ruined heart,
Nor yet their melodies will sound impart.

XVI.

So brave Leander sunders from his bride ;
The wrenching pang disparts his soul in twain ;
Half stays with her, half goes towards the tide—
And life must ache, until they join again.
Now wouldst thou know the wideness of the
wound
Mete every step he takes upon the ground.

XVII.

And for the agony and bosom throe,
Let it be measured by the wide vast air,
For that is infinite, and so is woe,
Since parted lovers breathe it everywhere.
Look how it heaves Leander's labouring chest,
Panting, at poise, upon a rocky crest !

XVIII.

From which he leaps into the scooping brine,
That shocks his bosom with a double chill ;
Because, all hours, till the slow sun's decline,
That cold divorcer will betwixt them still ;
Wherefore he likens it to Styx' foul tide,
Where life grows death upon the other side.

XIX.

Then sadly he confronts his twofold toil
Against rude waves and an unwilling mind,
Wishing, alas ! with the stout rower's toil,
That like a rower he might gaze behind,
And watch that lonely statue he hath left
On her bleak summit, weeping and bereft !

XX.

Yet turning oft, he sees her troubled locks
Pursue him still the furthest that they may ;
Her marble arms that overstretch the rocks,
And her pale passioned hands that seem to pray
In dumb petition to the gods above !
Love prays devoutly when it prays for love !

XXI.

Then with deep sighs he blows away the wave,
That hangs superfluous tears upon his cheek,
And bans his labour like a hopeless slave,
That, chained in hostile galley, faint and weak,
Plies on despairing through the restless foam,
Thoughtful of his lost love and far-off home.

XXII.

The drowsy mist before him chill and dank,
Like a dull lethargy o'erleans the sea,
Where he rows on against the utter blank,
Steering as if to dim eternity,—
Like Love's frail ghost departing with the dawn ;
A failing shadow in the twilight drawn.

XXIII.

And soon is gone,—or nothing but a faint
And failing image in the eye of thought,
That mocks his model with an after-paint,
And stains an atom like the shape she sought ;
Then with her earnest vows she hopes to fee,
The old and hoary majesty of sea.

XXIV.

“O King of waves, and brother of high Jove,
Preserve my sumless venture there afloat ;

A woman's heart, and its whole wealth of love,
Are all embarked upon that little boat ;
Nay, but two loves, two lives, a double fate,
A perilous voyage for so dear a freight.

XXV.

" If impious mariners be stained with crime,
Shake not in awful rage thy hoary locks ;
Lay by thy storms until another time,
Lest my frail bark be dashed against the rocks :
Or rather smooth thy deeps, that he may fly
Like Love himself, upon a seeming sky !

XXVI.

" Let all thy herded monsters sleep beneath,
Nor gore him with crooked tusks, or wreathed
horns ;
Let no fierce sharks destroy him with their teeth.
Nor spine-fish wound him with their venom'd
thorns ;
But if he faint, and timely succour lack,
Let ruthful dolphins rest him on their back.

XXVII.

" Let no false dimpling whirlpools suck him in,
Nor slimy quicksands smother his sweet breath ;
Let no jagged corals tear his tender skin,
Nor mountain billows bury him in death."
And with that thought forestalling her own fears,
She drowned his painted image in her tears.

XXVIII.

By this, the climbing sun, with rest repaired,
Looked through the gold embrasures of the sky,

And asked the drowsy world how she had fared ;
The drowsy world shone brightened in reply ;
And smiling off her fogs, his slanting beam
Spied young Leander in the middle stream.

XXIX.

His face was pallid, but the hectic morn
Had hung a lying crimson on his cheeks,
And slanderous sparkles in his eyes forlorn ;
So death lies ambushed in consumptive streaks ;
But inward grief was writhing o'er its task,
As heart-sick jesters weep behind the mask.

XXX.

He thought of Hero and the lost delight,
Her last embracings, and the space between ;
He thought of Hero and the future night,
Her speechless rapture and enamoured mien,
When, lo ! before him, scarce two galleys' space,
His thought's confronted with another face !

XXXI.

Her aspect's like a moon divinely fair,
But makes the midnight darker that it lies on ;
'Tis so beclouded with her coal-black hair
That densely skirts her luminous horizon,
Making her doubly fair, thus darkly set,
As marble lies advantaged upon jet.

XXXII.

She's all too bright, too argent, and too pale,
To be a woman :—but a woman's double,
Reflected on the wave so faint and frail,
She tops the billows like an air-blown bubble ;

Or dim creation of a morning dream,
Fair as the wave-bleached lily of the stream.

XXXIII.

The very rumour strikes his seeing dead :
Great beauty like great fear first stuns the sense :
He knows not if her lips be blue or red,
Nor if her eyes can give true evidence :
Like murder's witness swooning in the court,
His sight falls senseless by its own report.

XXXIV.

Anon resuming, it declares her eyes
Are tinct with azure, like two crystal wells,
That drink the blue complexion of the skies,
Or pearls outpeeping from their silvery shells ;
Her polished brow it is an ample plain,
To lodge vast contemplations of the main.

XXXV.

Her lips might corals seem, but corals near,
Stray through her hair like blossoms on a bower ;
And o'er the weaker red still domineer,
And make it pale by tribute to more power ;
Her rounded cheeks are of still paler hue,
Touched by the bloom of water, tender blue.

XXXVI.

Thus he beholds her rocking on the water,
Under the glossy umbrage of her hair,
Like pearly Amphitrite's fairest daughter
Naiad, or Nereid—or Syren fair,
Mislodging music in her pitiless breast,
A nightingale within a falcon's nest.

XXXVII.

They say there be such maidens in the deep,
Charming poor mariners, that all too near
By mortal lullabies fall dead asleep,
As drowsy men are poisoned through the ear ;
Therefore Leander's fears begin to urge,
This snowy swan is come to sing his dirge.

XXXVIII.

At which he falls into a deadly chill,
And strains his eyes upon her lips apart ;
Fearing each breath to feel that prelude shrill,
Pierce through his marrow, like a death-blown
 dart
Shot sudden from an Indian's hollow cane,
With mortal venom fraught, and fiery pain.

XXXIX.

Here then, poor wretch, how he begins to crowd
A thousand thoughts within a pulse's space ;
There seemed so brief a pause of life allowed,
His mind stretched universal, to embrace
The whole wide world, in an extreme farewell—
A moment's musing—but an age to tell.

XL.

For there stood Hero, widowed at a glance,
The foreseen sum of many a tedious fact,
Pale cheeks, dim eyes, and withered countenance,
A wasting ruin that no wasting lacked ;
Time's tragic consequents ere time began,
A world of sorrow in a tear-drop's span.

XLI.

A moment's thinking is an hour in words—
An hour of words is little for some woes ;
Too little breathing a long life affords,
For love to paint itself by perfect shows ;
Then let his love and grief unwronged lie dumb
Whilst Fear, and that it fears, together come.

XLII.

As when the crew, hard by some jutting cape,
Struck pale and panicked by the billows' roar,
Lay by all timely measures of escape,
And let their bark go driving on the shore ;
So frayed Leander, drifting to his wreck,
Gazing on Scylla, falls upon her neck.

XLIII.

For he hath all forgot the swimmer's art,
The rower's cunning, and the pilot's skill,
Letting his arms fall down in languid part,
Swayed by the waves, and nothing by his will,
Till soon he jars against that glossy skin,
Solid like glass, though seemingly as thin.

XLIV.

Lo ! how she startles at the warning shock,
And straightway girds him to her radiant breast,
More like his safe smooth harbour than his rock ;
Poor wretch, he is so faint and toil-oppressed,
He cannot loose him from his grappling foe,
Whether for love or hate, she lets not go.

XLV.

His eyes are blinded with the sleety brine,
His ears are deafened with the wildering noise ;

He asks the purpose of her fell design,
But foamy waves choke up his struggling voice ;
Under the ponderous sea his body dips,
And Hero's name dies bubbling on his lips.

XLVI.

Look how a man is lowered to his grave ;
A yearning hollow in the green earth's lap ;
So he is sunk into the yawning wave,
The plunging sea fills up the watery gap ;
Anon he is all gone, and nothing seen,
But likeness of green turf and hillocks green.

XLVII.

And where he swam, the constant sun lies sleeping,
Over the verdant plain that makes his bed ;
And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
Like gamesome boys over the churchyard dead ;
The light in vain keeps looking for his face,
Now screaming seafowl settle in his place.

XLVIII.

Yet weep and watch for him though all in vain !
Ye moaning billows, seek him as ye wander !
Ye gazing sunbeams, look for him again !
Ye winds, grow hoarse with asking for Leander !
Ye did but spare him for more cruel rape,
Sea-storm and ruin in a female shape !

XLIX.

She says 'tis love hath bribed her to this deed,
The glancing of his eyes did so bewitch her,

O bootless theft ! unprofitable meed !
Love's treasury is sacked, but she no richer ;
The sparkles of his eyes are cold and dead,
And all his golden looks are turned to lead !

L.

She holds the casket, but her simple hand
Hath spilled its dearest jewel by the way ;
She hath life's empty garment at command,
But her own death lies covert in the prey ;
As if a thief should steal a tainted vest,
Some dead man's spoil, and sicken of his pest.

LI.

Now she compels him to her deeps below,
Hiding his face beneath her plenteous hair,
Which jealously she shakes all round her brow,
For dread of envy, though no eyes are there
But seals', and all brute tenants of the deep,
Which heedless through the wave their journeys
keep.

LII.

Down and still downwards through the dusky green
She bore him, murmuring with joyous haste
In too rash ignorance, as he had been
Born to the texture of that watery waste ;
That which she breathed and sighed, the emerald
wave,
How could her pleasant home become his grave ?

LIII.

Down and still downward through the dusky
green
She bore her treasure, with a face too nigh

To mark how life was altered in its mien,
Or how the light grew torpid in his eye,
Or how his pearly breath unprisoned there,
Flew up to join the universal air.

LIV.

She could not miss the throbbings of his heart,
Whilst her own pulse so wantoned in its joy ;
She could not guess he struggled to depart,
And when he strove no more, the hapless boy !
She read his mortal stillness for content,
Feeling no fear where only love was meant.

LV.

Soon she alights upon her ocean-floor,
And straight unyokes her arms from her fair prize :
Then on his lovely face begins to pore,
As if to glut her soul ;—her hungry eyes
Have grown so jealous of her arms' delight ;
It seems, she hath no other sense but sight.

LVI.

But O sad marvel ! O most bitter strange !
What dismal magic makes his cheeks so pale,
Why will he not embrace,—why not exchange
Her kindly kisses ;—wherefore not exhale
Some odorous message from life's ruby gates,
Where she his first sweet embassy awaits ?

LVII.

Her eyes, poor watchers, fixed upon his looks,
Are grappled with a wonder near to grief,
As one, who pores on undeciphered books,
Strains vain surmise, and dodges with belief ;

So she keeps gazing with a mazy thought,
Framing a thousand doubts that end in naught.

LVIII.

Too stern inscription for a page so young,
The dark translation of his look was death !
But death was written in an alien tongue,
And learning was not by to give it breath ;
So one deep woe sleeps buried in its seal,
Which Time, untimely, hasteth to reveal.

LIX.

Meanwhile she sits unconscious of her hap,
Nursing Death's marble effigy, which there
With heavy head lies pillowed in her lap,
And elbows all unhinged :—his sleeking hair
Creeps o'er her knees, and settles where his hand
Leans with lax fingers crooked against the sand ;

LX.

And there lies spread in many an oozy trail,
Like glossy weeds hung from a chalky base,
That shows no whiter than his brow is pale ;
So soon the wintry death had bleached his face
Into cold marble,—with blue chilly shades,
Showing wherein the freezy blood pervades.

LXI.

And o'er his steadfast cheek a furrowed pain
Hath set, and stiffened like a storm in ice,
Showing by drooping lines the deadly strain
Of mortal anguish ;—yet you might gaze twice
Ere Death it seemed, and not his cousin, Sleep,
That through those creviced lids did underpeep.

LXII.

But all that tender bloom about his eyes,
Is death's own vi'lets, which his utmost rite
It is to scatter when the red rose dies ;
For blue is chilly, and akin to white :
Also he leaves some tinges on his lips,
Which he hath kissed with such cold frosty nips.

LXIII.

"Surely," quoth she, "he sleeps, the senseless
thing,
Oppressed and faint with toiling in the stream !'
Therefore she will not mar his rest, but sing
So low, her tune shall mingle with his dream ;
Meanwhile, her lily fingers tasks to twine
His uncrispt locks uncurling in the brine.

LXIV.

"O lovely boy !"—thus she attuned her voice,—
"Welcome, thrice welcome, to a sea-maid's home,
My love-mate thou shalt be, and true heart's
choice ;
How have I longed such a twin-self should
come,—
A lonely thing, till this sweet chance befell,
My heart kept sighing like a hollow shell.

LXV.

"Here thou shalt live, beneath this secret dome,
An ocean bower, defended by the shade
Of quiet waters ; a cool emerald gloom
To lap thee all about. Nay, be not frayed,
Those are but shady fishes that sail by
Like antic clouds across my liquid sky !

LXVI.

“ Look how the sunbeam burns upon their scales,
And shows rich glimpses of their Tyrian skins,
They flash small lightnings from their vigorous
tails,
And winking stars are kindled at their fins ;
These shall divert thee in thy weariest mood,
And seek thy hand for gamesomeness and food.

LXVII.

“ Lo ! those green pretty leaves with tassel bells,
My flowrets those, that never pine for drouth ;
Myself did plant them in the dappled shells,
That drink the wave with such a rosy mouth,—
Pearls wouldst thou have beside? crystals to shine?
I had such treasures once,—now they are thine.

LXVIII.

“ Now lay thine ear against this golden sand,
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea,
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land,—
Is't not a rich and wondrous melody?
I have lain hours, and fancied in its tone
I heard the languages of ages gone !

LXIX.

“ I too can sing when it shall please thy choice,
And breathe soft tunes through a melodious shell,
Though heretofore I have but set my voice
To some long sighs, grief harmonised, to tell
How desolate I fared ;—but this sweet change
Will add new notes of gladness to my range !

LXX.

“ Or bid me speak and I will tell thee tales,
Which I have framed out of the noise of waves ;
Ere now I have communed with senseless gales,
And held vain colloquies with barren caves ;
But I could talk to thee whole days and days,
Only to word my love a thousand ways.

LXXI.

“ But if thy lips will bless me with their speech,
Then ope, 'sweet oracles ! and I'll be mute ;
I was born ignorant for thee to teach,
Nay, all love's lore to thy dear looks impute ;
Then ope thine eyes, fair teachers, by whose light
I saw to give away my heart aright ! ”

LXXII.

But cold and deaf the sullen creature lies,
Over her knees, and with concealing clay,
Like hoarding Avarice locks up his eyes,
And leaves the world impoverished of day ;
Then at his cruel lips she bends to plead,
But there the door is closed against her need.

LXXIII.

Surely he sleeps—so her false wits infer !
Alas ! poor sluggard, ne'er to wake again !
Surely he sleeps, yet without any stir
That might denote a vision in his brain ;
Or if he does not sleep, he feigns too long,
Twice she hath reached the ending of her song.

LXXIV.

Therefore 'tis time she tells him to uncover
Those radiant jesters, and disperse her fears,

Whereby her April face is shaded over,
Like rainy clouds just ripe for showering tears ;
Nay, if he will not wake, so poor she gets,
Herself must rob those locked-up cabinets.

LXXV.

With that she stoops above his brow, and bids
Her busy hands forsake his tangled hair,
And tenderly lift up those coffer-lids,
That she may gaze upon the jewels there,
Like babes that pluck an early bud apart,
To know the dainty colour of its heart.

LXXVI.

Now, picture one, soft creeping to a bed,
Who slowly parts the fringe-hung canopies,
And then starts back to find the sleeper dead ;
So she looks in on his uncovered eyes,
And seeing all within so drear and dark,
Her own bright soul dies in her like a spark.

LXXVII.

Backward she falls, like a pale prophetess,
Under the swoon of holy divination :
And what had all surpassed her simple guess,
She now resolves in this dark revelation ;
Death's very mystery—oblivious death ;
Long sleep—deep night, and an entranced breath.

LXXVIII.

Yet life, though wounded sore, not wholly slain,
Merely obscured, and not extinguished, lies ;
Her breath that stood at ebb, soon flows again,
Heaving her hollow breast with heavy sighs,

And light comes in and kindles up the gloom,
To light her spirit from its transient tomb.

LXXIX.

Then like the sun, awakened at new dawn,
With pale bewildered face she peers about,
And spies blurred images obscurely drawn,
Uncertain shadows in a haze of doubt ;
But her true grief grows shapely by degrees,
A perished creature lying on her knees.

LXXX.

And now she knows how that old Murder preys,
Whose quarry on her lap lies newly slain ;
How he roams all abroad and grimly slays,
Like a lean tiger in Love's own domain ;
Parting from mates,—and oft in flowery lawns
Bereaves mild mothers of their milky fawns.

LXXXI.

O too dear knowledge ! O pernicious earning !
Foul curse engraven upon beauty's page !
Ev'n now the sorrow of that deadly learning
Ploughs up her brow, like an untimely age,
And on her cheek stamps verdict of death's truth,
By canker blights upon the bud of youth !

LXXXII.

For as unwholesome winds decay the leaf,
So her cheeks' rose is perished by her sighs,
And withers in the sickly breath of grief ,
Whilst unacquainted rheum bedims her eyes,
Tears, virgin tears, the first that ever leapt
From those young lids, now plentifully wept.

LXXXIII.

Whence being shed, the liquid crystalline
Drops straightway down, refusing to partake
In gross admixture with the baser brine,
But shrinks and hardens into pearls opaque,
Hereafter to be worn on arms and ears ;
So one maid's trophy is another's tears !

LXXXIV.

“ O foul Arch-Shadow, thou old cloud of Night,
(Thus in her frenzy she began to wail,)
Thou blank oblivion—blotter out of light,
Life's ruthless murderer, and dear love's bale !
Why hast thou left thy havoc incomplete,
Leaving me here, and slaying the more sweet ?

LXXXV.

“ Lo ! what a lovely ruin thou hast made,
Alas ! alas ! thou hast no eyes to see,
And blindly slew'st him in misguided shade.
Would I had lent my doting sense to thee !
But now I turn to thee, a willing mark,
Thine arrows miss me in the aimless dark !

LXXXVI.

“ O doubly cruel !—twice misdoing spite,
But I will guide thee with my helping eyes,
Or walk the wide world through, devoid of sight,
Yet thou shalt know me by my many sighs,
Nay, then thou shouldst have spared my rose, false
Death,
And known Love's flow'r by smelling his sweet
breath ;

LXXXVII.

“Or, when thy furious rage was round him dealing,
Love should have grown from touching of his skin,
But like cold marble thou art all unfeeling,
And hast no ruddy springs of warmth within,
And being but a shape of freezing bone,
Thy touching only turned my love to stone !

LXXXVIII.

“And here, alas ! he lies across my knees,
With cheeks still colder than the stilly wave,
The light beneath his eyelids seems to freeze,
Here then, since Love is dead and lacks a grave,
O come and dig it in my sad heart's core—
That wound will bring a balsam for its sore !

LXXXIX.

“For art thou not a sleep where sense of ill
Lies stingless, like a sense benumbed with cold,
Healing all hurts only with sleep's good will,
So shall I slumber, and perchance behold
My living love in dreams—O happy night,
That lets me company his banished spright !

XC.

“O poppy Death !—sweet poisoner of sleep !
Where shall I seek for thee, oblivious drug,
That I may steep thee in my drink, and creep
Out of life's coil. Look, Idol ! how I hug
Thy dainty image in this strict embrace,
And kiss this clay-cold model of thy face !

XCI.

“Put out, put out these sun-consuming lamps,
I do but read my sorrows by their shine,

O come and quench them with thy oozy damps,
And let my darkness intermix with thine ;
Since love is blinded, wherefore should I see ?
Now love is death—death will be love to me !

XCII.

“ Away, away, this vain complaining breath,
It does but stir the troubles that I weep,
Let it be hushed and quieted, sweet Death,
The wind must settle ere the wave can sleep—
Since love is silent, I would fain be mute,
O Death, be gracious to my dying suit ! ”

XCIII.

Thus far she pleads, but pleading naught avails
her,
For Death, her sullen burden, deigns no heed,
Then with dumb craving arms since darkness fails
her,
She prays to heav'n's fair light, as if her need
Inspired her there were gods to pity pain,
Or end it—but she lifts her arms in vain !

XCIV.

Poor gilded Grief ! the subtle light by this
With mazy gold creeps through her watery mine,
And, diving downward through the green abyss,
Lights up her palace with an amber shine ;
There, falling on her arms—the crystal skin
Reveals the ruby tide that fares within.

XCV.

Look how the fulsome beam would hang a glory
On her dark hair, but the dark hairs repel it ;

Look how the perjured glow suborns a story
On her pale lips, but lips refuse to tell it ;
Grief will not swerve from grief, however told
On coral lips, or characterized in gold ;

XCVI.

Or else, thou maid ! safe anchored on Love's
neck,
Listing the hapless doom of young Leander,
Thou wouldst not shed a tear for that old wreck,
Sitting secure where no wild surges wander ;
Whereas the woe moves on with tragic pace,
And shows its sad reflection in thy face.

XCVII.

Thus having travelled on, and tracked the tale,
Like the true course of an old bas-relief,
Where Tragedy pursues her progress pale,
Brood here awhile upon that sea-maid's grief,
And take a deeper imprint from the frieze
Of that young Fate, with Death upon her knees.

XCVIII.

Then whilst the melancholy muse withal
Resumes her music in a sadder tone,
Meanwhile the sunbeam strikes upon the wall,
Conceive that lovely siren to live on,
Ev'n as Hope whispered, the Promethean light
Would kindle up the dead Leander's sprite.

XCIX.

“ 'Tis light,” she says, “ that feeds the glittering
stars,
And those were stars set in his heavenly brow,

But this salt cloud, this cold sea-vapour, mars
Their radiant breathing, and obscures them now,
'Therefore I'll lay him in the clear blue air
And see how these dull orbs will kindle there.'

C.

Swiftly as dolphins glide, or swifter yet,
With dead Leander in her fond arms' fold,
She cleaves the meshes of that radiant net,
The sun hath twined above of liquid gold,
Nor slacks, till on the margin of the land,
She lays his body on the glowing sand.

CI.

There, like a pearly waif, just past the reach
Of foamy billows he lies cast. Just then,
Some listless fishers, straying down the beach,
Spy out this wonder. Thence the curious men,
Low crouching, creep into a thicket brake,
And watch her doings till their rude hearts ache.

CII.

First she begins to chafe him till she faints,
Then falls upon his mouth with kisses many,
And sometimes pauses in her own complaints
To list his breathing, but there is not any,—
Then looks into his eyes where no light dwells,
Light makes no pictures in such muddy wells.

CIII.

The hot sun parches his discovered eyes,
The hot sun beats on his discoloured limbs,
The sand is oozy whereupon he lies,
Soiling his fairness ; then away she swims,

Meaning to gather him a daintier bed,
Plucking the cool fresh weeds, brown, green, and red.

CIV.

But simple-witted thief, while she dives under,
Another robs her of her amorous theft ;
The ambushed fishermen creep forth to plunder,
And steal the unwatched treasure she has left ;
Only his void impression dints the sands !
Leander is purloined by stealthy hands !

CV.

Lo ! how she shudders off the beaded wave !
Like Grief all over tears, and senseless falls,
His void imprint seems hollowed for her grave,
Then, rising on her knees, looks round and calls
On Hero ! Hero ! having learned this name
Of his last breath, she calls him by the same.

CVI.

Then with her frantic hands she rends her hairs,
And casts them forth, sad keepsakes to the wind,
As if in plucking those she plucked her cares ;
But grief lies deeper, and remains behind
Like a barbed arrow, rankling in her brain,
Turning her very thoughts to throbs of pain.

CVII.

Anon her tangled locks are left alone,
And down upon the sand she meekly sits,
Hard by the foam as humble as a stone,
Like an enchanted maid beside her wits,
That ponders with a look serene and tragic,
Stunned by the mighty mystery of magic.

CVIII.

Or think of Ariadne's utter trance,
Crazed by the flight of that disloyal traitor,
Who left her gazing on the green expanse
That swallowed up his track,—yet this would mate
her,
Ev'n in the cloudy summit of her woe,
When o'er the far sea-brim she saw him go.

CIX.

For even so she bows, and bends her gaze
O'er the eternal waste, as if to sum
Its waves by weary thousands all her days,
Dismally doomed ! meanwhile the billows come,
And coldly dabble with her quiet feet,
Like any bleaching stones they wont to greet.

CX.

And thence into her lap have boldly sprung,
Washing her weedy tresses to and fro.
That round her crouching knees have darkly hung
But she sits careless of waves' ebb and flow,
Like a lone beacon on a desert coast,
Showing where all her hope was wrecked and lost.

CXI.

Yet whether in the sea or vaulted sky,
She knoweth not her love's abrupt resort,
So like a shape of dreams he left her eye,
Winking with doubt. Meanwhile, the churls' report
Has thronged the beach with many a curious face,
That peeps upon her from its hiding-place.

CXII.

And here a head, and there a brow half seen,
Dodges behind a rock. Here on his hands,
A mariner his crumpled cheeks doth lean
Over a rugged crest. Another stands,
Holding his harmful arrow at the head,
Still checked by human caution and strange dread.

CXIII.

One stops his ears,—another close beholder
Whispers unto the next his grave surmise ;
This crouches down,—and just above his shoulder,
A woman's pity saddens in her eyes,
And prompts her to befriend that lonely grief,
With all sweet helps of sisterly relief.

CXIV.

And down the sunny beach she paces slowly,
With many doubtful pauses by the way ;
Grief hath an influence so hushed and holy—
Making her twice attempt, ere she can lay
Her hand upon that sea-maid's shoulder white,
Which makes her startle up in wild affright.

CXV.

And, like a seal,,she leaps into the wave
That drowns the shrill remainder of her scream ;
Anon the sea fills up the watery cave,
And seals her exit with a foamy seam—
Leaving those baffled gazers on the beach
Turning in uncouth wonder each to each.

CXVI.

Some watch, some call, some see her head emerge,
Wherever a brown weed falls through the foam ;

Some point to white eruptions of the surge :
But she is vanished to her shady home
Under the deep, inscrutable—and there
Weeps in a midnight made of her own hair.

CXVII.

Now here, the sighing winds, before unheard,
Forth from their cloudy caves begin to blow,
Till all the surface of the deep is stirred,
Like to the panting grief it hides below ;
And heaven is covered with a stormy rack,
Soiling the waters with its inky black.

CXVIII.

The screaming fowl resigns her finny prey,
And labours shoreward with a bending wing,
Rowing against the wind her toilsome way ;
Meanwhile the curling billows chafe, and fling
Their dewy frost still further on the stones,
That answer to the wind with hollow groans.

CXIX.

And here and there a fisher's far-off bark
Flies with the sun's last glimpse upon its sail,
Like a bright flame amid the waters dark,
Watched with the hope and fear of maidens pale ;
And anxious mothers that upturn their brows,
Freighting the gusty wind with frequent vows,

CXX.

For that the horrid deep has no sure track
To guide love safe into his homely haven.
And lo ! the storm grows blacker in its wrath,
O'er the dark billow brooding like a raven,

'That bodes of death and widow's sorrowing,
Under the dusky covering of his wing.

CXXI.

And so day ended. But no vesper spark
Hung forth its heavenly sign ; but sheets of flame
Played round the savage features of the dark,
Making night horrible. 'That night there came
A weeping maiden to high Sestos' steep,
And tore her hair and gazed upon the deep.

CXXII.

And waved aloft her bright and ruddy torch,
Whose flame the boastful wind so rudely fanned,
That oft it would recoil, and basely scorch
The tender covert of her sheltering hand ;
Which yet, for love's dear sake, disdained retire,
And, like a glorying martyr, braved the fire.

CXXIII.

For that was love's own sign and beacon guide
Across the Hellespont's wide weary space,
Wherein he nightly struggled with the tide ;
Look what a red it forges on her face,
As if she blushed at holding such a light,
Even in the unseen presence of the night !

CXXIV.

Whereas her tragic cheek is truly pale,
And colder than the rude and ruffian air
That howls into her ear a horrid tale
Of storm, and wreck, and uttermost despair,
Saying, " Leander floats amid the surge,
And those are dismal waves that sing his dirge."

CXXV.

And hark !—a grieving voice, trembling and faint,
Blends with the hollow sobbings of the sea ;
Like the sad music of a siren's plaint,
But shriller than Leander's voice should be,
Unless the wintry death has changed its tone—
Wherefore she thinks she hears his spirit moan.

CXXVI.

For now, upon each brief and breathless pause,
Made by the raging winds, it plainly calls
On Hero ! Hero !—whereupon she draws
Close to the dizzy brink, that ne'er appals
Her brave and constant spirit to recoil,
However the wild billows toss and toil.

CXXVII.

“ Oh ! dost thou live under the deep, deep sea ?
I thought such love as thine could never die ;
If thou hast gained an immortality,
From the kind pitying sea-god, so will I ;
And this false cruel tide that used to sever
Our hearts, shall be our common home for ever !

CXXVIII.

“ There we will sit and sport upon one billow, .
And sing our ocean ditties all the day,
And lie together on the same green pillow,
That curls above us with its dewy spray ;
And ever in one presence live and dwell,
Like two twin pearls within the selfsame shell.”

CXXIX.

One moment, then, upon the dizzy verge
She stands, with face upturned against the sky ;

A moment more, upon the foamy surge
 She gazes, with a calm despairing eye ;
 Feeling that awful pause of blood and breath,
 Which life endures when it confronts with death ;

CXXX.

Then from the giddy steep she madly springs,
 Grasping her maiden robes, that vainly kept
 Panting abroad, like unavailing wings,
 To save her from her death.—The sea-maid wept,
 And in a crystal cave her corse enshrined,
 No meaner sepulchre should Hero find !



LYCUS, THE CENTAUR.

From an Unrolled Manuscript of Apollonius Curius.

TO J. H. REYNOLDS, ESQ.

“MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—You will remember ‘Lycus.’—It was written in the pleasant spring-time of our friendship, and I am glad to maintain that association by connecting your name with the poem. It will gratify me to find that you regard it with the old partiality for the writings of each other which prevailed in those days. For my own sake, I must regret that your pen goes now into far other records than those which used to delight me.

“Your true Friend and Brother,
 “T. HOOD.”

THE ARGUMENT.

Lycus, detained by Circe in her magical dominion, is beloved by a Water Nymph, who, desiring to render him immortal, has recourse to the Sorceress. Circe gives her an incantation to pronounce, which should turn Lycus into a horse ; but the horrible effect of the charm causing her to break off in the midst, he becomes a Centaur.

WHO hath ever been lured, and bound by a spell
To wander, fore-doomed, in that circle of hell
Where witchery works with her will like a god,
Works more than the wonders of time at a nod,—
At a word,—at a touch,—at a flash of the eye,
But each form is a cheat, and each sound is a lie,
Things born of a wish—to endure for a thought,
Or last for long ages—to vanish to nought,
Or put on new semblance? O Jove, I had given
The throne of a kingdom to know if that heaven
And the earth and its streams were of Circe, or
whether

They kept the world's birthday and brightened
together ;

For I loved them in terror, and constantly dreaded
That the earth where I trod, and the cave where I
bedded,

The face I might dote on, should live out the lease
Of the charm that created, and suddenly cease ;
And I gave me to slumber, as if from one dream
To another—each other—and drank of the stream
Like a first taste of blood, lest as water I quaffed
Swift poison, and never should breathe from the
draught,—

Such drink as her own monarch husband drained up
When he pledged her, and Fate closed his eyes in
the cup.

And I plucked of the fruit with held breath, and a
fear

That the branch would start back and scream out in
my ear ;

For once, at my suppering, I plucked in the dusk
An apple, juice-gushing and fragrant of musk ;

But by daylight my fingers were crimsoned with gore
And the half-eaten fragment was flesh at the core ;
And once—only once for the love of its blush,
I broke a bloom bough, but there came such a gush
On my hand, that it fainted away in weak fright,
While the leaf-hidden woodpecker shrieked at the
sight ;
And oh ! such an agony thrilled in that note,
That my soul, startling up, beat its wings in my
throat ;
As it longed to be free of a body whose hand
Was doomed to work torments a Fury had planned !

There I stood without stir, yet how willing to flee,
As if rooted and horror-turned into a tree,—
Oh ! for innocent death,—and to suddenly win it,
I drank of the stream, but no poison was in it ;
I plunged in its waters, but ere I could sink,
Some invisible fate pulled me back to the brink ;
I sprang from the rock, from its pinnacle height,
But fell on the grass, with a grasshopper's flight ;
I ran at my fears—they were fears and no more,
For the bear would not mangle my limbs, nor the
boar,
But moaned,—all their brutalised flesh could not
smother,
The horrible truth,—we were kin to each other !

They were mournfully gentle, and grouped for
relief,
All foes in their skin, but all friends in their grief :
The leopard was there,—baby-mild in its feature ;
And the tiger, black-barred, with the gaze of a
creature

That knew gentle pity ; the bristle-backed boar,
His innocent tusks stained with mulberry gore :
And the laughing hyena—but laughing no more ;
And the snake, not with magical orbs to devise
Strange death, but with woman's attraction of eyes :
The tall ugly ape, that still bore a dim shine
Through his hairy eclipse of a manhood divine ;
And the elephant stately, with more than its reason,
How thoughtful in sadness ! but this is no reason
To reckon them up from the lag-bellied toad
To the mammoth, whose sobs shook his ponderous
load.

There were woes of all shapes, wretched forms, when
I came,
That hung down their heads with a human-like
shame ;
The elephant hid in the boughs, and the bear
Shed over his eyes the dark veil of his hair ;
And the womanly soul turning sick with disgust,
Tried to vomit herself from her serpentine crust ;
While all groaned their groans into one at their lot,
As I brought them the image of what they were
not.

'Then rose a wild sound of the human voice choking
Through vile brutal organs—low tremulous croaking ;
Cries swallowed abruptly—deep animal tones
Attuned to strange passion, and full-uttered groans ;
All shuddering weaker, till hushed in a pause
Of tongues in mute motion and wide-yearning jaws ;
And I guessed that those horrors were meant to tell
o'er
The tale of their woes ; but the silence told more

That writhed on their tongues ; and I knelt on the sod,
And prayed with my voice to the cloud-stirring God,
For the sad congregation of supplicants there,
That upturned to his heaven brute faces of prayer ;
And I ceased, and they uttered a moaning so deep,
That I wept for my heart-ease,—but they could not
weep,
And gazed with red eyeballs, all wistfully dry,
At the comfort of tears in a stag's human eye.
Then I motioned them round, and, to soothe their
distress,
I caressed, and they bent them to meet my caress,
Their necks to my arm, and their heads to my palm,
And with poor grateful eyes suffered meekly and calm
Those tokens of kindness, withheld by hard fate
From returns that might chill the warm pity to hate :
So they passively bowed—save the serpent that leapt
To my breast like a sister, and pressingly crept
In embrace of my neck, and with close kisses blistered
My lips in rash love,—then drew backward, and
glistered
Her eyes in my face, and 'oud hissing affright,
Dropt down, and swift started away from my sight !

This sorrow was theirs, but thrice wretched my lot,
Turned brute in my soul, though my body was not,
When I fled from the sorrow of womanly faces,
That shrouded their woe in the shade of lone places,
And dashed off bright tears, till their fingers were wet,
And then wiped their lids with long tresses of jet :
But I fled—though they stretched out their hands, all
entangled

With hair, and blood-stained of the breasts they had
mangled—

Though they called—and perchance but to ask, had
I seen

Their loves, or to tell the vile wrongs that had been :
But I stayed not to hear, lest the story should hold
Some hell-form of words, some enchantment once told,
Might translate me in flesh to a brute ; and I dreaded
To gaze on their charms, lest my faith should be
wedded

With some pity,—and love in that pity perchance—
To a thing not all lovely ; for, once at a glance
Methought, where one sat, I descried a bright wonder
That flowed like a long silver rivulet under
The long fenny grass, with so lovely a breast,
Could it be a snake-tail made the charm of the rest?

So I roamed in that circle of horrors, and Fear
Walked with me, by hills, and in valleys, and near
Clustered trees for their gloom—not to shelter from
heat

But lest a brute-shadow should grow at my feet ;
And besides that, full oft in the sunshiny place,
Dark shadows would gather like clouds on its face,
In the horrible likeness of demons (that none
Could see, like invisible flames in the sun) ;
But grew to one monster that seized on the light,
Like the dragon that strangles the moon in the
night ;

Fierce sphinxes, long serpents, and asps of the
South ;

Wild birds of huge beak, and all horrors that drouth
Engenders of slime in the land of the pest,

Vile shapes without shape, and foul bats of the West,
Bringing Night on their wings; and the bodies
wherein

Great Brahma imprisons the spirits of sin,
Many-handed, that blent in one phantom fight
Like a Titan, and threatfully warred with the light;
I have heard the wild shriek that gave signal to close,
When they rushed on that shadowy Python of foes;
That met with sharp beaks and wide gaping of jaws,
With flapping of wings, and fierce grasping of claws,
And whirls of long tails:—I have seen the quick
flutter

Of fragments dissevered,—and necks stretched to
utter

Long screamings of pain,—the swift motion of blows,
And wrestling of arms—to the flight at the close,
When the dust of the earth startled upward in rings,
And flew on the whirlwind that followed their wings

Thus they fled—not forgotten—but often to grow
Like fears in my eyes, when I walked to and fro
In the shadows, and felt from some beings unseen
The warm touch of kisses, but clean or unclean
I knew not, nor whether the love I had won
Was of heaven or hell—till one day in the sun,
In its very noon-blaze, I could fancy a thing
Of beauty, but faint as the cloud-mirrors fling
On the gaze of the shepherd that watches the sky,
Half-seen and half-dreamed in the soul of his eye.
And when in my musings I gazed on the stream,
In motionless trances of thought, there would seem
A face like that face, looking upward through mine;
With its eyes full of love, and the dim-drowned shine

Of limbs and fair garments, like clouds in that blue
Serene :—there I stood for long hours but to view
Those fond earnest eyes that were ever uplifted
Towards me, and winked as the water-weed drifted
Between ; but the fish knew that presence, and plied
Their long curvy tails, and swift darted aside.

There I gazed for lost time, and forgot all the things
That once had been wonders—the fishes with wings,
And the glimmer of magnified eyes that looked up
From the glooms of the bottom, like pearls in a cup,
And the huge endless serpent of silvery gleam,
Slow winding along like a tide in the stream.
Some maid of the waters, some Naiad, methought
Held me dear in the pearl of her eye—and I brought
My wish to that fancy ; and often I dashed
My limbs in the water, and suddenly splashed
The cool drops around me, yet clung to the brink,
Chilled by watery fears, how that Beauty might sink
With my life in her arms to her garden, and bind me
With its long tangled grasses, or cruelly wind me
In some eddy to hum out my life in her ear,
Like a spider-caught bee,—and in aid of that fear
Came the tardy remembrance—O falsest of men !
Why was not that beauty remembered till then ?
My love, my safe love, whose glad life would have
run
Into mine—like a drop—that our fate might be one,
That now, even now, maybe, clasped in a dream,
That form which I gave to some jilt of the stream,
And gazed with fond eyes that her tears tried to
smother,
On a mock of those eyes that I gave to another !

Then I rose from the stream, but the eyes of my
mind,
Still full of the tempter, kept gazing behind
On her crystalline face, while I painfully leapt
To the bank, and shook off the curst waters, and wept
With my brow in the reeds ; and the reeds to my ear
Bowed, bent by no wind, and in whispers of fear,
Growing small with large secrets, foretold me of one
That loved me,—but oh ! to fly from her, and shun
Her love like a pest—though her love was as true
To mine as her stream to the heavenly blue ;
For why should I love her with love that would bring
All misfortune, like Hate, on so joyous a thing ?
Because of her rival,—even her whose witch face
I had slighted, and therefore was doomed in that
place
To roam, and had roamed, where all horrors grew
rank,
Nine days ere I wept with my brow on that bank ;
Her name be not named, but her spite would not fail
To our love like a blight ; and they told me the tale
Of Scylla, and Picus, imprisoned to speak
His shrill-screaming woe through a woodpecker's
beak.

Then they ceased—I had heard as the voice of my
star
That told me the truth of my fortunes—thus far
I had read of my sorrow ; and lay in the hush
Of deep meditation,—when lo ! a light crush
Of the reeds, and I turned and looked round in the
night
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipped of the light

Narrow-winking, the realised nymph of the stream,
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam
Of a fountain, and o'er her white arms she kept
throwing

Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing
In falls to her feet, and the blue waters rolled
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,
Sun-spangled, gold-broidered, and fled far behind,
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclined
In the reeds, and I hungered to see her unseal
The buds of her eyes, that would ope and reveal
The blue that was in them ; and they oped, and she
raised

Two orbs of pure crystal, and timidly gazed
With her eyes on my eyes ; but their colour and shine
Was of that which they looked on, and mostly of
mine—

For she loved me,—except when she blushed, and
they sank,

Shame-humbled, to number the stones on the bank,
Or her play-idle fingers, while lisping she told me
How she put on her veil, and in love to behold me,
Would wing through the sun till she fainted away
Like a mist, and then flew to her waters, and lay
In love-patience long hours, and sore dazzled her eyes
In watching for mine 'gainst the midsummer skies.
But now they were healed,—O my heart, it still dances
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances,
And my image how small when it sank in the deep
Of her eyes where her soul was,—alas ! now they
weep,

And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes
Shed invisible tears ? Who beholds where her sighs

Flow in eddies, or sees the ascent of the leaf
She has plucked with her tresses? Who listens her
grief

Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat
Them together? Ah! surely her flowers float adown
To the sea unaccepted, and little ones drown
For need of her mercy,—even he, whose twin brother
Will miss him for ever; and the sorrowful mother
Imploreth in vain for his body to kiss
And cling to, all dripping and cold as it is,
Because that soft pity is lost in hard pain!
We loved,—how we loved!—for I thought not again
Of the woes that were whispered like fears in that
place

If I gave me to beauty. Her face was the face
Far away, and her eyes were the eyes that were
drowned

For my absence,—her arms were the arms that
sought round,

And clasped me to nought; for I gazed, and became
Only true to my falsehood, and had but one name
For two loves, and called ever on Ægle, sweet maid
Of the sky-loving waters,—and was not afraid
Of the sight of her skin;—for it never could be,
Her beauty and love were misfortunes to me!

Thus our bliss had endured for a time-shortened
space,

Like a day made of three, and the smile of her face
Had been with me for joy,—when she told me indeed
Her love was self-tasked with a work that would
need

Some short hours, for in truth 'twas the veriest pity
Our love should not last, and then sang me a ditty,
Of one with warm lips that should love her, and love
her

When suns were burnt dim and long ages past over.
So she fled with her voice, and I patiently nested
My limbs in the reeds, in still quiet, and rested
Till my thoughts grew extinct, and I sank in a sleep
Of dreams,—but their meaning was hidden too deep
To be read what their woe was ;—but still it was woe
That was writ on all faces that swam to and fro
In that river of night ;—and the gaze of their eyes
Was sad,—and the bend of their brows,—and their
cries

Were seen, but I heard not. The warm touch of tears
Travelled down my cold cheeks, and I shook till my
fears

Awaked me, and lo ! I was couched in a bower,
The growth of long summers reared up in an hour !
Then I said, in the fear of my dream, I will fly
From this magic, but could not, because that my eye
Grew love-idle among the rich blooms ; and the earth
Held me down with its coolness of touch, and the
mirth

Of some bird was above me,—who, even in fear,
Would startle the thrush ? and methought there drew
near

A form as of Ægle,—but it was not the face
Hope made, and I knew the witch-queen of that
place,

Even Circe the Cruel, that came like a Death
Which I feared, and yet fled not, for want of my
breath.

There was thought in her face, and her eyes were not
raised

From the grass at her foot, but I saw, as I gazed,
Her spite—and her countenance changed with her
mind

As she planned how to thrall me with beauty, and
bind

My soul to her charms,—and her long tresses played
From shade into shine and from shine into shade,
Like a day in mid-autumn,—first fair, O how fair!

With long snaky locks of the adderblack hair
That clung round her neck,—those dark locks that I
prize,

For the sake of a maid that once loved me with
eyes

Of that fathomless hue,—but they changed as they
rolled,

And brightened, and suddenly blazed into gold
That she combed into flames, and the locks that fell
down,

Turned dark as they fell, but I slighted their brown,
Nor loved, till I saw the light ringlets shed wild,
That innocence wears when she is but a child ;

And her eyes,—O I ne'er had been witched with
their shine,

Had they been any other, my Ægle, than thine !

Then I gave me to magic, and gazed till I
maddened

In the full of their light,—but I saddened and
saddened

The deeper I looked,—till I sank on the snow
Of her bosom, a thing made of terror and woe,

And answered its throb with the shudder of fears,
And hid my cold eyes from her eyes with my tears,
And strained her white arms with the still languid
weight

Of a fainting distress. There she sat like the Fate
That is nurse unto Death, and bent over in shame
To hide me from her—the true *Ægle*—that came
With the words on her lips the false witch had fore-
given

To make me immortal—for now I was even
At the portals of Death, who but waited the hush
Of world-sounds in my ear to cry welcome, and rush
With my soul to the banks of his black-flowing river.
O would it had flown from my body for ever,
Ere I listened those words, when I felt with a start,
The life-blood rush back in one throb to my heart,
And saw the pale lips where the rest of that spell
Had perished in horror—and heard the farewell
Of that voice that was drowned in the dash of the
stream :

How fain had I followed, and plunged with that
scream

Into death, but my being indignantly lagged
Through the brutalised flesh that I painfully dragged
Behind me :—"O Circe ! O mother of Spite !
Speak the last of that curse ! and imprison me quite
In the husk of a brute,—that no pity may name
The man that I was,—that no kindred may claim
The monster I am ! Let me utterly be
Brute-buried, and Nature's dishonour with me
Uninscribed !" —But she listened my prayer, that
was praise

To her malice, with smiles, and advised me to gaze

On the river for love,—and perchance she would
make
In pity a maid without eyes for my sake,
And she left me like Scorn. Then I asked of the
wave,
What monster I was, and it trembled and gave
The true shape of my grief, and I turned with my
face
From all waters for ever, and fled through that place,
Till with horror more strong than all magic I passed
Its bounds, and the world was before me at last.

There I wandered in sorrow, and shunned the
abodes
Of men, that stood up in the likeness of gods,
But I saw from afar the warm shine of the sun
On their cities, where man was a million, not one ;
And I saw the white smoke of their altars ascending,
That showed where the hearts of the many were
blending,
And the wind in my face brought shrill voices that
came
From the trumpets that gathered whole bands in one
fame
As a chorus of man,—and they streamed from the
gates
Like a dusky libation poured out to the Fates.
But at times there were gentler processions of peace,
That I watched with my soul in my eyes till their
cease,
There were women ! there men ! but to me a third
sex
I saw them all dots—yet I loved them as specks :

And oft to assuage a sad yearning of eyes
I stole near the city, but stole covert-wise
Like a wild-beast of love, and perchance to be
smitten

By some hand that I rather had wept on than bitten !
Oh, I once had a haunt near a cot, where a mother
Daily sat in the shade with her child, and would
smother

Its eyelids in kisses, and then in its sleep
Sang dreams in its ear of its manhood, while deep
In a thicket of willows I gazed o'er the brooks
That murmured between us and kissed them with
looks ;

But the willows unbosomed their secret, and never
I returned to the spot I had startled for ever ;
Though I oft longed to know, but could ask it of
none,
Was the mother still fair, and how big was her son ?

For the haunters of fields they all shunned me by
flight,
The men in their horror, the women in fright ;
None ever remained save a child once that sported
Among the wild bluebells, and playfully courted
The breeze ; and beside him a speckled snake lay
Tight strangled, because it had hissed him away
From the flower at his finger ; he rose and drew near
Like a Son of Immortals, one born to no fear,
But with strength of black locks and with eyes azure
bright

To grow to large manhood of merciful might.
He came, with his face of bold wonder, to feel
The hair of my side, and to lift up my heel,

And questioned my face with wide eyes ; but when
under

My lids he saw tears,—for I wept at his wonder,
He stroked me, and uttered such kindness then,
That the once love of women, the friendship of men
In past sorrow, no kindness e'er came like a kiss
On my heart in its desolate day such as this !
And I yearned at his cheeks in my love, and down
bent,

And lifted him up in my arms with intent
To kiss him,—but he cruel-kindly, alas !
Held out to my lips a plucked handful of grass !
Then I dropt him in horror, but felt as I fled
The stone he indignantly hurled at my head,
That dissevered my ear,—but I felt not, whose fate
Was to meet more distress in his love than his hate !

Thus I wandered, companioned of grief and
forlorn,
Till I wished for that land where my being was
born,
But what was that land with its love, where my
home

Was self-shut against me ; for why should I come
Like an after-distress to my grey-bearded father,
With a blight to the last of his sight?—let him rather
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn
To his son even such as he left him. Oh, how
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but
now

Like gods to my humbled estate?—or how bear
The steeds once the pride of eyes and the care

Of my hands? Then I turned me self-banished, and
 came
 Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same
 As myself. I have heard how they met by a stream
 In games, and were suddenly changed by a scream
 That made wretches of many, as she rolled her wild
 eyes
 Against heaven, and so vanished,—the gentle and
 wise
 Lose their thoughts in deep studies, and others their
 ill
 In the mirth of mankind where they mingle them
 still.



THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

I.

ALAS ! that breathing Vanity should go
 Where Pride is buried,—like its very ghost,
 Uprisen from the naked bones below,
 In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast
 Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,
 Shedding its chilling superstition most
 On young and ignorant natures—as it wont
 To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bedfont !

II.

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,
 Behold two maidens, up the quiet green
 Shining, far distant, in the summer air
 That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between
 Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they were
 Two far-off ships,—until they brush between

The churchyard's humble walls, and watch and wait
On either side of the wide-opened gate.

III.

And there they stand—with haughty necks before
God's holy house, that points towards the skies—
Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,
And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes :
And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,
Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,
With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face ;

IV.

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,
May wear the happiness of rich attire ;
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,
May change the soul's warm glances for the fire
Of lifeless diamonds ;—and for health denied,—
With art, that blushes at itself, inspire
Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a glory
That has no life in life, nor after story.

V.

The aged priest goes shaking his grey hair
In meekest censuring, and turns his eye
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in prayer,
And sighs, and clasps his hands, and passes by.
Good-hearted man ! what sullen soul would wear
Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly
Put on thy censure, that might win the praise
Of one so grey in goodness and in days ?

VI.

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame
 Of this ungodly shine of human pride,
 And sadly blends his reverence and blame
 In one grave bow, and passes with a stride
 Impatient :—many a red-hooded dame
 Turns her pained head, but not her glance, aside
 For wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,
 That heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

VII.

“ I have a lily in the bloom at home,”
 Quoth one, “ and by the blessed Sabbath day
 I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come
 And read a lesson upon vain array ;
 And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some
 Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say—
 Making my reverence,—‘ Ladies, an' you please,
 King Solomon's not half so fine as these.’ ”

VIII.

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run
 His earthly course,—“ Nay, Goody, let your text
 Grow in the garden. We have only one—
 Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next?
 Summer will come again, and summer sun,
 And lilies too,—but I were sorely vexed
 To mar my garden, and cut short the blow
 Of the last lily I may live to grow.”

IX.

“ The last ! ” quoth she, “ and though the last it
 were—
 Lo ! those two wantons where they stand so proud

With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,
 And painted cheeks, like Dagon to be bowed
 And curtseyed to !—last Sabbath after prayer,
 I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud
 If they were angels—but I made him know
 God's bright ones better, with a bitter blow !"

X.

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk
 That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng
 Hand-coupled urchins in restrained talk,
 And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,
 And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,
 And gold-bedizened beadle flames along,
 And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
 Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene ;

XI.

And blushing maiden—modestly arrayed
 In spotless white,—still conscious of the glass ;
 And she, the lonely widow, that hath made
 A sable covenant with grief,—alas !
 She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,
 While the poor kindly-hearted, as they pass,
 Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress
 Her boy,—so rosy !—and so fatherless !

XII.

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all drew near
 The fair white temple, to the timely call
 Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.
 Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl
 Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
 Of the low porch, and heaven has won them all,—

Saving those two, that turn aside and pass
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

XIII.

Ah me ! to see their silken manors trailed
In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—
Flaunting the grass where widowhood has wailed.
In blotted black,—over the heapy mould
Panting wave-wantonly ! They never quailed
How the warm vanity abused the cold ;
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone :

XIV.

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,
Shocking the awful presence of the dead ;
Where gracious natures would their eyes benight,
Nor wear their being with a lip too red,
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright
Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their tread,
Meting it into steps, with inward breath,
In very pity to bereaved death.

XV.

Now in the church, time-sobered minds resign
To solemn prayer, and the loud-chaunted hymn,—
With glowing picturings of joys divine
Painting the mist-light where the roof is dim ;
But youth looks upward to the window shine,
Warming with rose, and purple, and the swim
Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains
Of gorgeous light through many-coloured panes ;

XVI.

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath
 Enrobed his angels,—and with absent eyes
 Hearing of heaven, and its directed path,
 Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious skies
 Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's wrath
 Consumes his pity, and he glows and cries,
 With a deep voice that trembles in its might,
 And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light :

XVII.

“ O that the vacant eye would learn to look
 On very beauty, and the heart embrace
 True loveliness, and from this holy Book
 Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace
 Of love indeed ! O that the young soul took
 Its virgin passion from the glorious face
 Of fair religion, and addressed its strife,
 To win the riches of eternal life !

XVIII.

“ Doth the vain heart love glory that is none,
 And the poor excellence of vain attire ?
 O go, and drown your eyes against the sun,
 The visible ruler of the starry quire,
 Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,
 Dazzling the brain with orbs of living fire :
 And the faint soul down darkens into night,
 And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

XIX.

“ O go, and gaze—when the low winds of ev'n
 Breathe hymns, and Nature's many forests nod

Their gold-crowned heads ; and the rich blooms of
heav'n

Sun-ripened give their blushes up to God ;
And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riv'n

By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod
Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense
May quench its longings of magnificence !

XX.

“ Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade away—

Day into darkness—darkness into death—
Death into silence ; the warm light of day,

The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath
Of even—all shall wither and decay,

Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath
The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes
That break and vanish in the aching eyes.”

XXI.

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant shed
Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and
pour

Their sin to earth,—and with low drooping head

Receive the solemn blessing, and implore
Its grace—then soberly with chastened tread,

They meekly press towards the gusty door,
With humbled eyes that go to gaze upon
The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

XXII.

The lowly grass !—O water-constant mind !

Fast-ebbing holiness !—soon-fading grace

Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind
 Through the low porch had washed it from the
 face
 For ever ! How they lift their eyes to find
 Old vanities. Pride wins the very place
 Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now
 With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow !

XXIII.

And lo ! with eager looks they seek the way
 Of old temptation at the lowly gate ;
 To feast on feathers, and on vain array,
 And painted cheeks, and the rich glistening state
 Of jewel-sprinkled locks. But where are they,
 The graceless haughty ones that used to wait
 With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffened eye ?
 None challenge the old homage bending by.

XXIV.

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom
 Of rich apparel where it glowed before,—
 For Vanity has faded all to gloom,
 And lofty Pride has stiffened to the core,
 For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—
 Set for a warning token evermore,
 Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise
 Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring eyes.

XXV.

The aged priest goes on each Sabbath morn,
 But shakes not sorrow under his grey hair ;
 The solemn clerk goes lavendered and shorn,
 Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair ;

And ancient lips that puckered up in scorn,
 Go smoothly breathing to the house of pray'r ;
 And in the garden-plot, from day to day,
 The lily blooms its long white life away.

XXVI.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,
 In pride of plume, where plummy Death had trod,
 Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,
 Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod ;
 There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see
 Two sombre Peacocks.—Age, with sapient nod
 Marking the spot, still tarries to declare
 How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.

*THE TWO SWANS.*

A FAIRY TALE.

IMMORTAL Imogen, crown'd queen above
 The lilies of thy sex, vouchsafe to hear
 A fairy dream in honour of true love—
 True above ills, and frailty, and all fear—
 Perchance a shadow of his own career
 Whose youth was darkly prison'd and long-twined
 By serpent sorrow, till white Love drew near,
 And sweetly sang him free, and round his mind
 bright horizon threw, wherein no grief may wind.

I saw a tower builded on a lake,
 Mock'd by its inverse shadow, dark and deep—
 That seem'd a still intenser night to make,
 Wherein the quiet waters sank to sleep,—

And, whatsoe'er was prison'd in that keep,
A monstrous Snake was warden:—round and round
In sable ringlets I beheld him creep,
Blackest amid black shadows to the ground,
Whilst his enormous head the topmost turret crown'd.

From whence he shot fierce light against the stars,
Making the pale moon paler with affright;
And with his ruby eye out-threaten'd Mars—
That blazed in the mid-heavens, hot and bright—
Nor slept, nor wink'd, but with a steadfast spite
Watch'd their wan looks and tremblings in the skies;
And that he might not slumber in the night,
The curtain-lids were pluck'd from his large eyes,
So he might never drowse, but watch his secret prize.

Prince or princess in dismal durance pent,
Victims of old Enchantment's love or hate,
Their lives must all in painful sighs be spent,
Watching the lonely waters soon and late,
And clouds that pass and leave them to their fate.
Or company their grief with heavy tears:—
Meanwhile that Hope can spy no golden gate
For sweet escapement, but in darksome fears
They weep and pine away as if immortal years.

No gentle bird with gold upon its wing
Will perch upon the grate—the gentle bird
Is safe in leafy dell, and will not bring
Freedom's sweet key-note and commission-word
Learn'd of a fairy's lips, for pity stirr'd—
Lest while he trembling sings, untimely guest!
Watch'd by that cruel Snake and darkly heard.

He leave a widow on her lonely nest,
To press in silent grief the darlings of her breast.

No gallant knight, adventurous, in his bark,
Will seek the fruitful perils of the place,
To rouse with dipping oar the waters dark
That bear the serpent-image on their face.
And Love, brave Love! though he attempt the
base,
Nerved to his loyal death, he may not win
His captive lady from the strict embrace
Of that foul Serpent, clasping her within
His sable folds—like Eve enthral'd by the old Sin.

But there is none—no knight in panoply,
Nor Love, intrench'd in his strong steely coat ;
No little speck—no sail—no helper nigh,
No sign—no whispering—no plash of boat :—
The distant shores show dimly and remote,
Made of a deeper mist,—serene and grey,—
And slow and mute the cloudy shadows float
Over the gloomy wave, and pass away,
Chased by the silver beams that on their margins play.

And bright and silvery the willows sleep
Over the shady verge—no mad winds tease
Their hoary heads ; but quietly they weep
Their sprinkling leaves—half fountains and half
trees :

There lilies be—and fairer than all these,
A solitary Swan her breast of snow
Launches against the wave that seems to freeze
Into a chaste reflection, still below
Twin shadow of herself wherever she may go.

And forth she paddles in the very noon
Of solemn midnight like an elfin thing,
Charm'd into being by the argent moon—
Whose silver light for love of her fair wing
Goes with her in the shade, still worshipping
Her dainty plumage :—all around her grew
A radiant circlet, like a fairy ring ;
And all behind, a tiny little clue
Of light, to guide her back across the waters blue.

And sure she is no meaner than a fay
Redeem'd from sleepy death, for beauty's sake,
By old ordainment :—silent as she lay,
Touch'd by a moonlight wand I saw her wake,
And cut her leafy slough, and so forsake
The verdant prison of her lily peers,
That slept amidst the stars upon the lake—
A breathing shape—restored to human fears,
And new-born love and grief—self-conscious of her
tears.

And now she clasps her wings around her heart,
And near that lonely isle begins to glide,
Pale as her fears, and oft-times with a start
Turns her impatient head from side to side
In universal terrors—all too wide
To watch ; and often to that marble keep
Upturns her pearly eyes, as if she spied
Some foe, and crouches in the shadows steep
That in the gloomy wave go diving fathoms deep.

And well she may, to spy that fearful thing
All down the dusky walls in circlets wound.

Alas ! for what rare prize, with many a ring
Girding the marble casket round and round ?
His folded tail lost in the gloom profound,
Terribly darkeneth the rocky base ;
But on the top his monstrous head is crown'd
With prickly spears, and on his doubtful face
Gleam his unwearied eyes, red watchers of the place.

Alas ! of the hot fires that nightly fall,
No one will scorch him in those orbs of spite,
So he may never see beneath the wall
That timid little creature, all too bright,
That stretches her fair neck, slender and white,
Invoking the pale moon, and vainly tries
Her throbbing throat, as if to charm the night
With song—but, hush—it perishes in sighs,
And there will be no dirge sad-swelling, though she
dies !

She droops—she sinks—she leans upon the lake,
Fainting again into a lifeless flower ;
But soon the chilly springs anoint and wake
Her spirit from its death, and with new power
She sheds her stifled sorrows in a shower
Of tender song, timed to her falling tears—
That wins the shady summit of that tower,
And, trembling all the sweeter for its fears,
Fills with imploring moan that cruel monster's ears.

And, lo ! the scaly beast is all deprest,
Subdued like Argus by the might of sound—
What time Apollo his sweet lute addrest
To magic converse with the air, and bound
The many monster eyes, all slumber-drown'd :—

So on the turret-top that watchful Snake
Pillows his giant head, and lists profound,
As if his wrathful spite would never wake,
Charm'd into sudden sleep for Love and Beauty's
sake.

His prickly crest lies prone upon his crown,
And thirsty lip from lip disparted flies,
To drink that dainty flood of music down—
His scaly throat is big with pent-up sighs—
And whilst his hollow ear entranced lies,
His looks for envy of the charmed sense
Are fain to listen, till his steadfast eyes,
Stung into pain by their own impotence,
Distil enormous tears into the lake immense.

Oh, tuneful Swan ! oh, melancholy bird !
Sweet was that midnight miracle of song,
Rich with ripe sorrow, needful of no word
To tell of pain, and love, and love's deep wrong—
Hinting a piteous tale—perchance how long
Thy unknown tears were mingled with the lake,
What time disguised thy leafy mates among—
And no eye knew what human love and ache
Dwelt in those dewy leaves, and heart so nigh to
break.

Therefore no poet will ungently touch
The water-lily, on whose eyelids dew
Trembles like tears ; but ever hold it such
As human pain may wander through and through,
Turning the pale leaf paler in its hue—
Wherein life dwells, transfigured, not entomb'd,
By magic spells. Alas ! who ever knew

Sorrow in all its shapes, leafy and plumed,
Or in gross husks of brutes eternally inhumed?

And now the winged song has scaled the height
Of that dark dwelling, builded for despair,
And soon a little casement flashing bright
Widens self-open'd into the cool air—
That music like a bird may enter there
And soothe the captive in his stony cage ;
For there is nought of grief, or painful care,
But plaintive song may happily engage
From sense of its own ill, and tenderly assuage.

And forth into the light, small and remote,
A creature, like the fair son of a king,
Draws to the lattice in his jewell'd coat
Against the silver moonlight glistening,
And leans upon his white hand listening
To that sweet music that with tenderer tone
Salutes him, wondering what kindly thing
Is come to soothe him with so tuneful moan,
Singing beneath the walls as if for him alone.

And while he listens, the mysterious song,
Woven with timid particles of speech,
Twines into passionate words that grieve along
The melancholy notes, and softly teach
The secrets of true love,— that trembling reach
His earnest ear, and through the shadows dun
He missions like replies, and each to each
Their silver voices mingle into one,
Like blended streams that make one music as they
run.

"Ah! Love, my hope is swooning in my heart,"—

"Ay, sweet, my cage is strong and hung full
high"—

"Alas! our lips are held so far apart,
Thy words come faint,—they have so far to fly!"—

"If I may only shun that serpent-eye,"—

"Ah me! that serpent-eye doth never sleep;"—

"Then, nearer thee, Love's martyr, I will die!—

"Alas, alas! that word has made me weep!

For pity's sake remain safe in thy marble keep!"

"My marble keep! it is my marble tomb"—

"Nay, sweet! but thou hast there thy living
breath"—

"Aye to expend in sighs for this hard doom; —

"But I will come to thee and sing beneath,
And nightly so beguile this serpent wreath;"—

"Nay, I will find a path from these despairs,"—

"Ah, needs then thou must tread the back of
death,

Making his stony ribs thy stony stairs.—

Behold his ruby eye, how fearfully it glares!"

Full sudden at these words, the princely youth

Leaps on the scaly back that slumbers, still

Unconscious of his foot, yet not for ruth,

But numb'd to dulness by the fairy skill

Of that sweet music (all more wild and shrill

For intense fear) that charm'd him as he lay—

Meanwhile the lover nerves his desperate will,

Held some short throbs by natural dismay,

Then down the serpent-track begins his darksome
way.

Now dimly seen—now toiling out of sight,
Eclipsed and cover'd by the envious wall ;
Now fair and spangled in the sudden light,
And clinging with wide arms for fear of fall ;
Now dark and sheltered by a kindly pall
Of dusky shadow from his wakeful foe ;
Slowly he winds adown—dimly and small,
Watch'd by the gentle Swan that sings below,
Her hope increasing, still, the larger he doth grow.

But nine times nine the serpent folds embrace
The marble walls about—which he must tread
Before his anxious foot may touch the base :
Long is the dreary path, and must be sped !
But Love, that holds the mastery of dread,
Braces his spirit, and with constant toil
He wins his way, and now, with arms outspread
Impatient plunges from the last long coil :
So may all gentle Love ungentle Malice foil !

The song is hush'd, the charm is all complete,
And two fair Swans are swimming on the lake :
But scarce their tender bills have time to meet
When fiercely drops adown that cruel Snake—
His steely scales a fearful rustling make,
Like autumn leaves that tremble and foretell
The sable storm ;—the plummy lovers quake—
And feel the troubled waters pant and swell,
Heaved by the giant bulk of their pursuer fell.

His jaws, wide yawning like the gates of Death,
Hiss horrible pursuit—his red eyes glare
The waters into blood—his eager breath
Grows hot upon their plumes :—now minstrel fair !

She drops her ring into the waves, and there
It widens all around, a fairy ring
Wrought of the silver light—the fearful pair
Swim in the very midst, and pant and cling
The closer for their fears, and tremble wing to wing.

Bending their course over the pale grey lake,
Against the pallid East, wherein light play'd
In tender flushes, still the baffled Snake
Circled them round continually, and bay'd
Hoarsely and loud, forbidden to invade
The sanctuary ring—his sable mail
Roll'd darkly through the flood, and writhed and
 made
A shining track over the waters pale,
Lash'd into boiling foam by his enormous tail.

And so they sail'd into the distance dim,
Into the very distance—small and white,
Like snowy blossoms of the spring that swim
Over the brooklets—follow'd by the spite
Of that huge Serpent, that with wild affright
Worried them on their course, and sore annoy,
Till on the grassy marge I saw them 'light,
And change, anon, a gentle girl and boy,
Lock'd in embrace of sweet unutterable joy !

Then came the Morn, and with her pearly showers
Wept on them, like a mother, in whose eyes
Tears are no grief ; and from his rosy bowers
The Oriental sun began to rise,
Chasing the darksome shadows from the skies ;

.

Wherewith that sable Serpent far away
Fled, like a part of night—delicious sighs
From waking blossoms purified the day
And little birds were singing sweetly from each spray.

*ODE TO MELANCHOLY.*

COME, let us set our careful breasts,
Like Philomel against the thorn,
To aggravate the inward grief,
That makes her accents so forlorn ;
The world has many cruel points,
Whereby our bosoms have been torn,
And there are dainty themes of grief,
In sadness to outlast the morn,—
True honour's dearth, affection's death,
Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,
With all the piteous tales that tears
Have watered since the world was born.

The world !—it is a wilderness
Where tears are hung on every tree ;
For thus my gloomy phantasy
Makes all things weep with me !
Come let us sit and watch the sky,
And fancy clouds where no clouds be ;
Grief is enough to blot the eye,
And make heaven black with misery.
Why should birds sing such merry notes,
Unless they were more blest than we ?
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,

Except sweet nightingale ; for she
Was born to pain our hearts the more
With her sad melody.
Why shines the sun, except that he
Makes gloomy nooks for Grief to hide,
And pensive shades for Melancholy,
When all the earth is bright beside?
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass wave,
Mirth shall not win us back again,
Whilst man is made of his own grave,
And fairest clouds but gilded rain !


I saw my mother in her shroud,
Her cheek was cold and very pale ;
And ever since I've looked on all
As creatures doomed to fail !
Why do buds ope, except to die?
Ay, let us watch the roses wither,
And think of our loves' cheeks ;
And oh, how quickly time doth fly
To bring death's winter hither !
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks,
Months, years, and ages shrink to nought ;
An age past is but a thought !

Ay, let us think of him awhile,
That, with a coffin for a boat,
Rows daily o'er the Stygian moat,
And for our table choose a tomb :
There's dark enough in any skull
To charge with black a raven plume.
And for the saddest funeral thoughts
A winding-sheet hath ample room,

Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,
Hath writ the common doom.
How wide the yew-tree spreads its gloom,
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,
As if in tears it wept for them,
The many human families
That sleep around its stem !

How cold the dead have made these stones,
With natural drops kept ever wet !
Lo ! here the best, the worst, the world
Doth now remember or forget,
Are in one common ruin hurled,
And love and hate are calmly met ;
The loveliest eyes that ever shone,
The fairest hands, and locks of jet.
Is't not enough to vex our souls,
And fill our eyes, that we have set
Our love upon a rose's leaf,
Our hearts upon a violet ?
Blue eyes, red cheeks, are frailer yet ;
And, sometimes, at their swift decay,
Beforehand we must fret :
The roses bud and bloom again ;
But love may haunt the grave of love,
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss ;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this :
Forgive, if somehow I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss.



As frightened Proserpine let fall
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,
Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss.
The sunniest things throw sternest shade,
And there is even a happiness
That makes the heart afraid !

Now let us with a spell invoke
The full-orbed moon to grieve our eyes ;
Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud
Lapped all about her, let her rise
All pale and dim, as if from rest
The ghost of the late buried sun
Had crept into the skies.
The Moon ! she is the source of sighs,
The very face to make us sad ;
If but to think in other times
The same calm quiet look she had,
As if the world held nothing base,
Of vile and mean, of fierce and bad ;
The same fair light that shone in streams,
The fairy lamp that charmed the lad ;
For so it is with spent delights
She taunts men's brains and makes them mad.

All things are touched with Melancholy,
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,
To feel her fair ethereal wings
Weighed down with vile degraded dust ;
Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O give her, then, her tribute just,

Her sighs and tears, and musings holy !
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter solely ;
There's not a string attuned to mirth,
But has its chord in Melancholy.



THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER.

SUMMER is gone on swallows' wings,
And Earth has buried all her flowers :
No more the lark, the linnet sings,
But Silence sits in faded bowers.
There is a shadow on the plain
Of Winter ere he comes again,—
There is in woods a solemn sound
Of hollow warnings whispered round,
As Echo in her deep recess
For once had turned a prophetess.
Shuddering Autumn stops to list,
And breathes his fear in sudden sighs,
With clouded face, and hazel eyes
That quench themselves, and hide in mist.

Yes, Summer's gone like pageant bright ;
Its glorious days of golden light
Are gone—the mimic suns that quiver,
Then melt in Time's dark-flowing river.
Gone the sweetly scented breeze
That spoke in music to the trees ;
Gone for damp and chilly breath,
As if fresh blown o'er marble seas,
Or newly from the lungs of Death.

Gone its virgin roses' blushes,
Warm as when Aurora rushes
Freshly from the god's embrace,
With all her shame upon her face.
Old Time hath laid them in the mould ;
Sure he is blind as well as old,
Whose hand relentless never spares
Young cheeks so beauty-bright as theirs !
Gone are the flame-eyed lovers now
From where so blushing-blest they tarried
Under the hawthorn's blossom-bough,
Gone ; for Day and Night are married.
All the light of love is fled :
Alas ! that negro breasts should hide
The lips that were so rosy red,
At morning and at even-tide !

Delightful Summer ! then adieu
Till thou shalt visit us anew :
But who without regretful sigh
Can say, adieu, and see thee fly ?
Not he that e'er hath felt thy power,
His joy expanding like a flower
That cometh after rain and snow,
Looks up at heaven, and learns to glow :
Not he that fled from Babel-strife
To the green Sabbath-land of life,
To dodge dull Care 'mid clustered trees,
And cool his forehead in the breeze,—
Whose spirit, weary-worn perchance,
Shook from its wings a weight of grief,
And perched upon an aspen leaf,
For every breath to make it dance.

Farewell !—on wings of sombre stain,
That blacken in the last blue skies,
Thou fly'st ; but thou wilt come again
On the gay wings of butterflies.
Spring at thy approach will sprout
Her new Corinthian beauties out,
Leaf-woven homes, where twitter-words
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds ;
Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,
And April smiles to sunny hours.
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights
Full of soft-breath and echo-lights,
As if the god of sun-time kept
His eyes half open while he slept.
Roses shall be where roses were,
Not shadows, but reality ;
As if they never perished there,
But slept in immortality :
Nature shall thrill with new delight,
And Time's relumined river run
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright,
As if its source were in the sun !

But say, hath Winter then no charms ?
Is there no joy, no gladness warms
His aged heart ? no happy wiles
To cheat the hoary one to smiles ?
Onward he comes—the cruel North
Pours his furious whirlwind forth
Before him—and we breathe the breath
Of famished bears that howl to death.
Onward he comes from rocks that blanch
O'er solid streams that never flow,

His tears all ice, his locks all snow,
Just crept from some huge avalanche—
A thing half-breathing and half-warm,
As if one spark began to glow
Within some statue's marble form;
Or pilgrim stiffened in the storm.
Oh ! will not Mirth's light arrows fail
To pierce that frozen coat of mail ?
Oh ! will not Joy but strive in vain
To light up those glazed eyes again ?

No ! take him in, and blaze the oak,
And pour the wine, and warm the ale ;
His sides shall shake to many a joke,
His tongue shall thaw in many a tale,
His eyes grow bright, his heart be gay,
And even his palsy charmed away.
What heeds he then the boisterous shout
Of angry winds that scold without,
Like shrewish wives at tavern door ?
What heeds he then the wild uproar
Of billows bursting on the shore ?
In dashing waves, in howling breeze,
There is a music that can charm him ;
When safe, and sheltered, and at ease,
He hears the storm that cannot harm him.

But hark ! those shouts ! that sudden din
Of little hearts that laugh within.
Oh ! take him where the youngsters play,
And he will grow as young as they !
They come ! they come ! each blue-eyed Sport,
The Twelfth-Night King and all his court—

'Tis Mirth fresh crowned with mistletoe !
Music with her merry fiddles,
Joy "on light fantastic toe,"
Wit with all its jests and riddles,
Singing and dancing as they go.
And Love, young Love, among the rest,
A welcome—nor unbidden guest.

But still for Summer dost thou grieve?
Then read our Poets—they shall weave
A garden of green fancies still,
Where thy wish may rove at will.
They have kept for after treats
The essences of summer sweets,
And echoes of its songs that wind
In endless music through the mind :
They have stamped in visible traces
The "thoughts that breathe," in words that
shine—

The flights of soul in sunny places—
To greet and company with thine.
These shall wing thee on to flowers—
The past or Future, that shall seem
All the brighter in thy dream
For blowing in such desert hours.
The summer never shines so bright
As thought of in a winter's night ;
And the sweetest, loveliest rose
Is in the bud before it blows.
The dear one of the lover's heart
Is painted to his longing eyes,
In charms she ne'er can realize—
But when she turns again to part.

Dream thou then, and bind thy brow
 With wreath of fancy roses now,
 And drink of Summer in the cup
 Where the Muse hath mixed it up ;
 The " dance and song, and sunburnt mirth,"
 With the warm nectar of the earth :
 Drink ! 'twill glow in every vein,
 And thou shalt dream the winter through :
 Then waken to the sun again,
 And find thy Summer Vision true ?



ODE.—AUTUMN.

I.

I SAW old Autumn in the misty morn
 Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
 To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
 Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
 Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn ;
 Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
 With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
 Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

II.

Where are the songs of Summer?—With the sun,
 Oping the dusky eyelids of the south,
 Till shade and silence waken up as one.
 And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.
 Where are the merry birds?—Away, away,
 On panting wings through the inclement skies,
 Lest owls should prey
 Undazzled at noonday,
 And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.

III.

Where are the blooms of Summer?—In the west,
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest
Like tearful Proserpine, snatched from her flowers
To a most gloomy breast.

Where is the pride of Summer,—the green prime,—
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—Three
On the mossed elm ; three on the naked lime
Trembling,—and one upon the old oak tree !

Where is the Dryads' immortality?
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

IV.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplished hoard,
The ants have brimmed their garners with ripe
grain,

And honey bees have stored
The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells ;
The swallows all have winged across the main ;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells,
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.

Alone, alone,

Upon a mossy stone,

She sits and reckons up the dead and gone
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the withered world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drowned past
In the hushed mind's mysterious far away,

Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into that distance, grey upon the grey.

V.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded
Under the languid downfall of her hair :
She wears a coronal of flowers faded
Upon her forehead, and a face of care ;
There is enough of withered everywhere
To make her bower,—and enough of gloom ;
There is enough of sadness to invite,
If only for the rose that died,—whose doom
Is Beauty's,—she that with the living bloom
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light.
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear,—
Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl ;
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul !

*ODE TO THE MOON.*

I.

MOTHER of light ! how fairly dost thou go
Over those hoary crests, divinely led !
Art thou that huntress of the silver bow
Fabled of old ? Or rather dost thou tread
Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,
Like the wild chamois from her Alpine snow,
Where hunter never climbed,—secure from dread ?
How many antique fancies have I read

Of that mild presence ! and how many wrought !
 Wondrous and bright,
 Upon the silver light,
Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought !

II.

What art thou like ? Sometimes I see thee ride
A far-bound galley on its perilous way,
Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray ;
 Sometimes behold thee glide,
Clustered by all thy family of stars,
Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide
Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars ;
Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,
Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,
Till in some Latmian cave I see thee creep,
To catch the young Endymion asleep,—
Leaving thy splendour at the jagged porch !

III.

Oh, thou art beautiful, howe'er it be !
Huntress, or Dian, or whatever named !
And he, the veriest Pagan, that first framed
A silver idol, and ne'er worshipped thee !
It is too late, or thou shouldst have my knee
Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,
And not divine the crescent on thy brows !
Yet, call thee nothing but the mere mild Moon,
 Behind those chestnut boughs,
Casting their dappled shadows at my feet ;
I will be grateful for that simple boon,
In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,
And bless thy dainty face whene'er we meet.

IV.

In nights far gone,—ay, far away and dead,—
Before care-fretted with a lidless eye,—
I was thy wooer on my little bed,
Letting the early hours of rest go by,
To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,
And feed thy snow-white swans before I slept ;
For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—
Thou wert the fairies' armourer, that kept
Their burnished helms, and crowns, and corslets
 bright,
 Their spears and glittering mails ;
And ever thou didst spill in winding streams
 Sparkles and midnight gleams,
For fishes to new gloss their argent scales !

V.

Why sighs?—why creeping tears?—why clasped
 hands?
Is it to count the boy's expended dower?
That fairies since have broke their gifted wands?
That young Delight, like any o'erblown flower,
Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground?
Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,
Thou art a sadder dial to old Time
 Than ever I have found
On sunny garden-plot or moss-grown tower,
Mottoed with stern and melancholy rhyme.

VI.

Why should I grieve for this?—O I must yearn,
Whilst Time, conspirator with Memory,
Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,
Richly embossed with childhood's revelry,

With leaves and clustered fruits, and flowers
 eterne,—

(Eternal to the world, though not to me,)

Ay, there will those brave sports and blossoms be,
 The deathless wreath, and undecayed festoon,

When I am hearsed within,—

Less than the pallid primrose to the Moon,

That now she watches through a vapour thin.

VII.

So let it be :—Before I lived to sigh

Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,

Beautiful Orb ! and so, whene'er I lie

Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.

Blest be thy loving light, where'er it spills,

And blessed thy fair face, O Mother mild !

Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,

Still lend thy lonely lamp to lovers fond,

And blend their plighted shadows into one :

Still smile at even on the bedded child,

And close his eyelids with thy silver wand !



TO HOPE.

OH ! take, young seraph, take thy harp,

And play to me so cheerily ;

For grief is dark, and care is sharp,

And life wears on so wearily.

Oh ! take thy harp !

Oh ! sing as thou were wont to do,

When, all youth's sunny season long,

I sat and listen'd to thy song,

And yet, 'twas ever, ever new,
With magic in its heaven-tuned string—
The future bliss thy constant theme,
Oh! then each little woe took wing
Away, like phantoms of a dream;
As if each sound
That fluttered round
Had floated over Lethe's stream!
By all those bright and happy hours
We spent in life's sweet eastern bow'rs,
Where thou wouldst sit and smile, and show,
Ere buds were come, where flowers would grow,
And oft anticipate the rise
Of life's warm sun that scaled the skies;
By many a story of love and glory,
And friendships promised oft to me;
By all the faith I lent to thee,—
Oh! take, young seraph, take thy harp,
And play to me so cheerily;
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,
And life wears on so wearily,
Oh! take thy harp!

Perchance the strings will sound less clear,
That long have lain neglected by
In sorrow's misty atmosphere:
It ne'er may speak as it has spoken
Such joyous notes so brisk and high;
But are its golden chords all broken?
Are there not some, though weak and low,
To play a lullaby to woe?
But thou canst sing of love no more,
For Celia show'd that dream was vain;

And many a fancied bliss is o'er,
That comes not e'en in dreams again.

Alas ! alas !

How pleasures pass,
And leave thee now no subject, save
The peace and bliss beyond the grave !

Then be thy flight among the skies ;
Take, then, oh ! take the skylark's wing,
And leave dull earth, and heavenward rise
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing
On skylark's wing !

Another life-spring there adorns
Another youth, without the dread
Of cruel care, whose crown of thorns
Is here for manhood's aching head,
Oh ! there are realms of welcome day,
A world where tears are wiped away !
Then be thy flight among the skies :
Take, then, oh ! take the skylark's wing,
And leave dull earth, and heavenward rise
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing
On skylark's wing !



FAIR INES.

I.

O SAW ye not fair Ines ?
She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest :

She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

II.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the Moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivalled bright ;
And blessed will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write !

III.

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whispered thee so near !
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear ?

IV.

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before :
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore ;
It would have been a beauteous dream,—
If it had been no more !

V.

Alas, alas, fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng ;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

VI.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore !
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more !

*THE SEA OF DEATH.*

A FRAGMENT.

METHOUGHT I saw
Life swiftly treading over endless space :
And, at her footprint, but a bygone pace,
The ocean-past, which, with increasing wave,
Swallowed her steps like a pursuing grave.
Sad were my thoughts that anchored silently
On the dead waters of that passionless sea,
Unstirred by any touch of living breath :
Silence hung over it and drowsy death,

Like a gorged sea-bird, slept with folded wings
On crowded carcasses—sad passive things
That wore the thin grey surface, like a veil
Over the calmness of their features pale.

And there were spring-faced cherubs that did sleep
Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,
How beautiful ! with bright unruffled hair
On sleek unfretted brows, and eyes that were
Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse !
And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant lips,
Meekly apart, as if the soul intense
Spake out in dreams of its own innocence :
And so they lay in loveliness, and kept
The birth-night of their peace, that Life e'en wept
With very envy of their happy fronts ;
For there were neighbour brows scarred by the
 brunts
Of strife and sorrowing—where Care had set
His crooked autograph, and marred the jet
Of glossy locks, with hollow eyes forlorn,
And lips that curled in bitterness and scorn—
Wretched,—as they had breathed of this world's
 pain,
And so bequeathed it to the world again •
Through the beholder's heart in heavy sighs.

So lay they garmented in torpid light,
Under the pall of a transparent night,
Like solemn apparitions lulled sublime
To everlasting rest,—and with them Time
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.

BALLAD.

SIGH on, sad heart, for Love's eclipse,
And Beauty's fairest queen,
Tho' 'tis not for my peasant lips
To soil her name between :
A king might lay his sceptre down,
But I am poor and nought,
The brow should wear a golden crown
That wears her in its thought.

The diamonds glancing in her hair,
Whose sudden beams surprise,
Might bid such humble hopes beware
The glancing of her eyes ;
Yet looking once, I looked too long,
And if my love is sin,
Death follows on the heels of wrong,
And kills the crime within.

Her dress seemed wove of lily leaves,
It was so pure and fine,
O lofty wears and lowly weaves,
But hodden grey is mine ;
And homely hose must step apart,
Where gartered princes stand,
But may he wear my love at heart
That wins her lily hand !

Alas ! there's far from russet frieze
To silks and satin gowns,
But I doubt if God made like degrees,
In courtly hearts and clowns'.

My father wronged a maiden's mirth,
And brought her cheeks to blame,
And all that's lordly of my birth
Is my reproach and shame !

'Tis vain to weep,—'tis vain to sigh,
'Tis vain this idle speech,
For where her happy pearls do lie,
My tears may never reach ;
Yet when I'm gone, e'en lofty pride
May say of what has been,
His love was nobly born and died,
Tho' all the rest was mean !

My speech is rude,—but speech is weak
Such love as mine to tell,
Yet had I words, I dare not speak,
So, Lady, fare thee well ;
I will not wish thy better state
Was one of low degree,
But I must weep that partial fate
Made such a churl of me.



SERENADE.

AH, sweet, thou little knowest how
I wake and passionate watches keep ;
And yet while I address thee now,
Methinks thou smilest in thy sleep.
'Tis sweet enough to make me weep,
That tender thought of love and thee,
That while the world is hush'd so deep,
Thy soul's perhaps awake to me !

Sleep on, sleep on, sweet bride of sleep !
With golden visions for thy dower,
While I this midnight vigil keep,
And bless thee in thy silent bower ;
To me 'tis sweeter than the power
Of sleep, and fairy dreams unfurl'd,
That I alone, at this still hour,
In patient love outwatch the world.

*FLOWERS.*

I WILL not have the maid Clytie,
Whose head is turned by the sun ;
The tulip is a courtly quean,
Whom therefore I will shun ;
The cowslip is a country wench ;
The violet is a nun ;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand ;
The wolfsbane I should dread ;
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead ;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,
And so is no mate for me—
And the daisy's cheek is tipp'd with a blush,
She is of such low degree ;

Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom's betroth'd to the bee ;—
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

*RUTH.*

SHE stood breast high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened ;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim ;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks :

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean ;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.



BALLAD.

SHE's up and gone, the graceless girl !
And robbed my failing years !
My blood before was thin and cold,
But now 'tis turned to tears ;
My shadow falls upon my grave,
So near the brink I stand,
She might have stayed a little yet,
And led me by the hand !

Ay, call her on the barren moor,
And call her on the hill,
Tis nothing but the heron's cry,
And plover's answer shrill ;
My child is flown on wilder wings
Than they have ever spread,
And I may even walk a waste
That widened when she fled.

Full many a thankless child has been,
But never one like mine ;
Her meat was served on plates of gold,
Her drink was rosy wine ;
But now she'll share the robin's food,
And sup the common rill,
Before her feet will turn again
To meet her father's will !

BALLAD.

It was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast !
It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed.
That churlish season never frowned
On early lovers yet !
Oh no—the world was newly crowned
With flowers, when first we met.
Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast ;
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed !
What else could peer my glowing cheek
That tears began to stud ?
And when I asked the like of Love
You snatched a damask bud,—
And oped it to the dainty core
Still glowing to the last :
It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed !

*AUTUMN.*

I.

THE Autumn skies are flushed with gold
And fair and bright the rivers run ;
These are but streams of winter cold,
And painted mists that quench the sun.

II.

In secret boughs no sweet birds sing,
In secret boughs no bird can shroud ;
These are but leaves that take to wing,
And wintry winds that pipe so loud.

III.

'Tis not trees' shade, but cloudy glooms
That on the cheerless valleys fall,
The flowers are in their grassy tombs
And tears of dew are on them all.



SONG.—FOR MUSIC.

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here !
Thy gown should be snow-white silk,
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipped in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls !
Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dower—
But Fairies have broke their wands,
And wishing has lost its power !

*TIME, HOPE, AND MEMORY.*

I HEARD a gentle maiden, in the spring,
Set her sweet sighs to music, and thus sing :
“ Fly through the world, and I will follow thee,
Only for looks that may turn back on me ;

“ Only for roses that your chance may throw—
Though withered—I will wear them on my brow,
To be a thoughtful fragrance to my brain,—
Warm'd with such love, that they will bloom again.

“ Thy love before thee, I must tread behind,
Kissing thy footprints, though to me unkind ;
But trust not all her fondness, though it seem,
Lest thy true love should rest on a false dream.

“ Her face is smiling, and her voice is sweet ;
But smiles betray, and music sings deceit ;
And words speak false ;—yet, if they welcome prove,
I'll be their echo, and repeat their love.

Only if wakened to sad truth, at last,
The bitterness to come, and sweetness past ;
When thou art vexed, then turn again, and see
Thou hast loved Hope, but Memory loved thee.



OLD BALLAD.

Air—“ There was a King in the North Countree.

THERE was a Fairy lived in a well,
And she pronounced a magical spell :
“ Whoever looks in this wave,” she said,
“ Shall see the lady that he's to wed ! ”

A King came by with his hunting-spear,
And stoop'd to look in the waters clear ;
He laid by the brim his signet of gold,
And gave his Brother his crown to hold.

But while he knelt and was looking down,
His Brother stood and tried on the crown ;
The pearls were bright, and the rubies brave,
So he tumbled his Brother into the wave.

“ O Brother, O Brother, you’ve got my ring,
And the lawful crown that made me king ;
But your heart shall fail, and your hand shall quake,
And the head that wears my jewels shall ache ! ”

The murderer stood and look’d from the brink,
“ The sun is so hot, I should like to drink ! ”
But lo ! as he stoop’d with a silver cup,
His head went down, and his heels flew up !

“ O Brother, O Brother, I’ve got your crown,
But the weight of the jewels has pull’d me down ;
You shall be crown’d in the skies again,
But I shall be mark’d on the brow like Cain ! ”

Down he sank in the dismal wave,
As cold as death, and dark as the grave ;
But when he came to the stones at last,
The Fairy caught him, and held him fast.

She took him into her crystal hall,
And there he saw his face in the wall ;
She look’d rosy, but he look’d white,
And all the tapers were burning bright.

The King leap’d down from his Fairy throne,
With eyes that brighter than diamonds shone ;
His left hand balanced a golden globe,
But his right hand lifted his purple robe.

“ O Brother, O Brother, bend down your knee,
But kneel to Heaven, and not to me,
For God may frown on your grievous sin,
But I’m too happy you push’d me in.

“ Come hither, come hither, you’re welcome now,
To my crown of gold that decks your brow ;
There’s smiles worth heav’n on my true love’s face,
And she has made me King of this place ! ”



TO A COLD BEAUTY.

I.

LADY, would'st thou heiress be
To Winter's cold and cruel part ?
When he sets the rivers free
Thou dost still lock up thy heart ;
Thou that shouldst outlast the snow,
But in the whiteness of thy brow.

II.

Scorn and cold neglect are made
For winter gloom and winter wind,
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,
Breathing it to words unkind,—
Breath which only should belong,
To love, to sunlight, and to song !

III.

When the little buds uncloze,
Red, and white, and pied, and blue,

And that virgin flower, the rose,
Opes her heart to hold the dew,
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up
With no jewel in its cup?

IV.

Let no cold December sit
Thus in love's peculiar throne ;
Brooklets are not prisoned now,
But crystal frosts are all agone,
And that which hangs upon the spray,
It is no snow, but flower of May !



TO JANE.

WELCOME, dear heart, and a most kind good-
morrow ;

The day is gloomy, but our looks shall shine :
Flow'rs I have none to give thee, but I borrow
Their sweetness in a verse to speak for thine.

Here are red roses, gathered at thy cheeks,—
The white were all too happy to look white :
For love the rose, for faith the lily speaks ;
It withers in false hands, but here tis bright !

Dost love sweet Hyacinth ? Its scented leaf
Curls manifold,—all love's delights blow double :
'Tis said this flow'ret is inscribed with grief,—
But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.

I plucked the Primrose at night's dewy noon ;
 Like Hope, it showed its blossoms in the night ;
 'Twas, like Endymion, watching for the Moon !
 And here are Sunflowers amorous of light !

These golden Buttercups are April's seal,—
 The Daisy stars her constellations be ;
 These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,
 Therefore I pluck no Daisies but for thee !

Here's Daisies for the Morn, Primrose for gloom,
 Pansies and Roses for the noontide hours :
 A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—
 So may thy life be measured out by flow'rs !



I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I

I REMEMBER, I remember,
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn ;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day,
 But now I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away !

II.

I remember, I remember,
 The roses, red and white,
 The vi'lets, and the lily-cups,
 Those flowers made of light !

The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday,—
The tree is living yet !

III.

I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing ;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow !

IV.

I remember, I remember,
The fir-trees dark and high
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky :
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heav'n
Than when I was a boy.



SONG.

I.

THE stars are with the voyager
Wherever he may sail ;
The moon is constant to her time ;
The sun will never fail ;

But follow, follow round the world,
The green earth and the sea ;
So love is with the lover's heart,
Wherever he may be.

II.

Wherever he may be, the stars
Must daily lose their light ;
The moon will veil her in the shade ;
The sun will set at night.
The sun may set, but constant love
Will shine when he's away ;
So that dull night is never night,
And day is brighter day.

*BALLAD.*

SPRING it is cheery,
Winter is dreary,
Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly :
When he's forsaken,
Withered and shaken,
What can an old man do but die ?

Love will not clip him,
Maids will not lip him,
Maud and Marian pass him by ;
Youth it is sunny,
Age has no honey,—
What can an old man do but die ?

June it was jolly,
O for its folly !
A dancing leg and a laughing eye :
Youth may be silly,
Wisdom is chilly,—
What can an old man do but die ?

Friends, they are scanty,
Beggars are plenty,
If he has followers, I know why ;
Gold's in his clutches,
(Buying him crutches !)
What can an old man do but die ?



THE EXILE.

THE swallow with summer
Will wing o'er the seas,
The wind that I sigh to
Will visit thy trees.
The ship that it hastens
Thy ports will contain,
But me—I shall never
See England again !

There's many that weep there,
But one weeps alone,
For the tears that are falling
So far from her own ;
So far from thy own, love,
We know not our pain :
If death is between us,
Or only the main.

When the white cloud reclines
On the verge of the sea,
I fancy the white cliffs,
And dream upon thee ;
But the cloud spreads its wings
To the blue heav'n and flies,
We never shall meet, love,
Except in the skies !

*TO MY WIFE.*

STILL glides the gentle streamlet on,
With shifting current new and strange ;
The water, that was here, is gone,
But those green shadows never change.

Serene or ruffled by the storm,
On present waves, as on the past,
The mirror'd grove retains its form,
The self-same trees their semblance cast.

The hue each fleeting globule wears,
That drop bequeaths it to the next ;
One picture still the surface bears ;
To illustrate the murmur'd text.

So, love, however time may flow,
Fresh hours pursuing those that flee,
One constant image still shall show
My tide of life is true to thee.

THE DEATHBED.

WE watch'd her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seem'd to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied—
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
Another morn than ours.

*THE POET'S PORTION.*

WHAT is a mine—a treasury—a dower—
A magic talisman of mighty power?
A poet's wide possession of the earth.
He has th' enjoyment of a flower's birth
Before its budding—ere the first red streaks,
And Winter cannot rob him of their cheeks.

Look—if his dawn be not as other men's!
Twenty bright flushes—ere another kens

The first of sunlight is abroad—he sees
Its golden 'lection of the topmost trees,
And opes the splendid fissures of the morn.

When do his fruits delay, when doth his corn
Linger for harvesting? Before the leaf
Is commonly abroad, in his pil'd sheaf
The flagging poppies lose their ancient flame.
No sweet there is, no pleasure I can name,

But he will sip it first—before the lees.
'Tis his to taste rich honey,—ere the bees
Are busy with the brooms. He may forestall
June's rosy advent for his coronal ;
Before th' expectant buds upon the bough,
Twining his thoughts to bloom upon his brow.

Oh ! blest to see the flower in its seed,
Before its leafy presence ; for indeed
Leaves are but wings on which the summer flies
And each thing perishable fades and dies,
Escap'd in thought ; but his rich thinkings be
Like overflows of immortality ;
So that what there is steep'd shall perish never,
But live and bloom, and be a joy for ever.



THE FAREWELL.

FOR A FRENCH AIR.

FARE thee well,
Gabrielle !
Whilst I join France
With bright cuirass and lance,

Trumpets swell,
Gabrielle !
War-horses prance,
And cavaliers advance.

In the night,
Ere the fight,
In the night,
I'll think of thee !
And in prayer,
Lady fair,
In thy prayer
Think of me !

Death may knell,
Gabrielle !
When my plumes dance
By arquebus or lance,
Then farewell,
Gabrielle !
Take my last glance,
Fair maid of France.



TO A FALSE FRIEND.

OUR hands have met, but not our hearts ;
Our hands will never meet again.
Friends, if we have ever been,
Friends we cannot now remain :
I only know I loved you once,
I only know I loved in vain ;
Our hands have met, but not our hearts ;
Our hands will never meet again !

Then farewell to heart and hand !
I would our hands had never met :
Even the outward form of love
Must be resigned with some regret.
Friends, we still might seem to be,
If I my wrong could e'er forget ;
Our hands have joined, but not our hearts ;
I would our hands had never met !



THE FORSAKEN.

THE dead are in their silent graves,
And the dew is cold above,
And the living weep and sigh,
Over the dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,
But now the living cause my pain :
How couldst thou steal me from my tears,
To leave me to my tears again ?

My mother rests beneath the sod,—
Her rest is calm and very deep :
I wish'd that she could see our loves,—
But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,
The morning saw them turned to grey,
Once they were black and well beloved,
But thou art changed,—and so are they !

The useless lock I gave thee once,
To gaze upon and think of me,
Was ta'en with smiles,—but this was torn
In sorrow that I send to thee !



VERSES IN AN ALBUM.

FAR above the hollow
Tempest and its moan
Singeth bright Apollo
In his golden zone,—
Cloud doth never shade him,
Nor a storm invade him
On his joyous throne.

So when I behold me
In an orb as bright,
How thy soul doth fold me
In its throne of light !
Sorrow never paineth,
Nor a care attaineth,
To that blessed height.



HYMN TO THE SUN.

GIVER of glowing light !
Though but a god of other days,
The kings and sages
Of wiser ages
Still live and gladden in thy genial rays !

King of the tuneful lyre,
Still poets' hymns to thee belong ;
 Though lips are cold
 Whereon of old
Thy beams all turned to worshipping and song !

Lord of the dreadful bow,
None triumph now for Python's death :
 But thou dost save
 From hungry grave
The life that hangs upon a summer breath.

Father of rosy day,
No more thy clouds of incense rise ;
 But waking flowers
 At morning hours,
Give out their sweets to meet thee in the skies.

God of the Delphic fane,
No more thou listenest to hymns sublime :
 But they will leave
 On winds at eve,
A solemn echo to the end of time.



SONG.

O LADY, leave that silken thread
And flowery tapestry :
There's living roses on the bush,
And blossoms on the tree ;
Stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand
Some random bud will meet ;

Thou canst not tread, but thou wilt find
The daisy at thy feet.

'Tis like the birthday of the world,
When earth was born in bloom ;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume ;
There's crimson buds, and white and blue—
The very rainbow showers
Have turn'd to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers.

There's fairy tulips in the east,
The garden of the sun ;
The very streams reflect the hues,
And blossoms as they run :
While Morn opes like a crimson rose,
Still wet with pearly showers ;
Then, lady, leave the silken thread
Thou twinest into flowers!



I LOVE THEE.

I LOVE thee—I love thee !
'Tis all I can say ;
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day ;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray :
I love thee—I love thee !
Is all that I can say.

I love thee—I love thee !
Is ever on my tongue ;
In all my proudest poesy
That chorus still is sung ;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
Amidst the gay and young :
I love thee—I love thee !
A thousand maids among.

I love thee—I love thee !
Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
Whose tender tones entrance ;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
That still these words enhance,
I love thee—I love thee !
Whatever be thy chance.



BIRTHDAY VERSES.

GOOD morrow to the golden morning,
Good morrow to the world's delight—
I've come to bless thy life's beginning,
Since it makes my own so bright !

I have brought no roses, sweetest,
I could find no flowers, dear,—
It was when all sweets were over
Thou wert born to bless the year.*

* My mother's birthday was the 6th November.

But I've brought thee jewels, dearest,
 In thy bonny locks to shine,—
 And if love shows in their glances,
 They have learned that look of mine !



*TO A CHILD EMBRACING HIS
 MOTHER.*

LOVE thy mother, little one !
 Kiss and clasp her neck again,—
 Hereafter she may have a son
 Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
 Love thy mother, little one.

Gaze upon her living eyes,
 And mirror back her love to thee,—
 Hereafter thou may'st shudder sighs
 To meet them when they cannot see
 Gaze upon her living eyes.

Press her lips the while they glow
 With love that they have often told,—
 Hereafter thou may'st press in woe,
 And kiss them till thine own are cold.
 Press her lips the while they glow !

Oh ! revere her raven hair !
 Although it be not silver grey ;
 Too early Death, led on by Care,
 May snatch save one dear lock away.
 Oh ! revere her raven hair !

Pray for her at eve and morn
That Heaven may long the stroke defer,—
For thou may'st live the hour forlorn
When thou wilt ask to die with her.
Pray for her at eve and morn !

*FRAGMENT.*

I HAD a dream—the summer beam
Played on the wings of merry hours—
Made long, long smiles of merry hours ;
But Life 'gan throw a warp of woe
Across its tapestry of flowers.
Fear's darker shade took form and made—
Like shadows darkling in light most sparkling.
The fragrant tombs amid the blooms
Of April in a garden ground
Show'd many a name that none could claim
Half read between the roses round.
Unbanish'd clouds like coffin-shrouds
Neighbour'd the sun amid the blue,
And tearful streams mix'd with his beams,
Yet made no promise as they flew.
Young Hope indeed began to read
The prophecies with cheerful look,
But dark Despair look'd over there,
And wept black blots upon her book.
And scarce the form all bright and warm
Of Joy was woven into birth,
When, like her shade, black Grief was laid
Prone at her feet along the earth.

Then do not chide—the sunny side
Of monuments for Joy is made,
But Sorrow still must weep her fill
On those that lie beneath the shade.



TO AN ABSENTEE.

O'ER hill and dale, and distant sea,
Through all the miles that stretch between,
My thought must fly to rest on thee,
And would though worlds should intervene.

Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks
The farther we are forced apart,
Affection's firm elastic links
But bind thee closer round the heart.

For now we sever each from each,
I learn what I have lost in thee ;
Alas ! that nothing less could teach,
How great indeed my love should be !

Farewell ! I did not know thy worth,
But thou art gone, and now 'tis prized ;
So angels walked, unknown on earth,
But when they flew, were recognised !



THE WATER LADY.

ALAS, the moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see !
I saw a maiden on a stream,
And fair was she !

I stayed awhile, to see her throw
Her tresses back, that all beset
The fair horizon of her brow
With clouds of jet.

I stayed a little while to view
Her cheek, that wore in place of red
The bloom of water, tender blue,
Daintily spread.

I stayed to watch, a little space,
Her parted lips if she would sing ;
The waters closed above her face
With many a ring.

And still I stayed a little more,
Alas ! she never comes again !
I throw my flowers from the shore,
And watch in vain.

I know my life will fade away,
I know that I must vainly pine,
For I am made of mortal clay,
But she s divine !



STANZAS.

WE did not wear a leafy crown,
And darkly glance to darker glance,
Under the green leaf and the brown,
Wooing the eyes of maids of France,
With very bloomy down :
We stain'd not hands with purple blood

In golden Arno's pleasant vale,
Where the proud Brothers quench'd the stain.
And saw two murderers in the flood
With faces guilty-pale :
Nor on the sunny hills of Spain
We used to drink the sun and twine
Long amorous tendrils to entrap
The careless finger of maid to linger
And pluck us from the trembling vine
To brim her dimpled lap.

*AUTUMN.*

THE Autumn is old,
The sere leaves are flying ;
He hath gathered up gold,
And now he is dying ;—
Old Age, begin sighing !

The vintage is ripe,
The harvest is heaping ;
But some that have sow'd
Have no riches for reaping ;—
Poor wretch, fall a-weeping !

The year's in the wane,
There is nothing adorning,
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning ;—
Cold winter gives warning.

The rivers run chill,
The red sun is sinking,
And I am grown old,
And life is fast shrinking ;—
There's enow for sad thinking !

*TO CELIA.*

OLD fictions say that Love hath eyes,
Yet sees, unhappy boy ! with none ;
Blind as the night ! but fiction lies,
For Love doth always see with one.

To one our graces all unveil,
To one our flaws are all exposed ;
But when with tenderness we hail,
He smiles, and keeps the critic closed.

But when he's scorned, abused, estranged,
He opes the eye of evil ken,
And all his angel friends are changed
To demons—and are hated then !

Yet once it happ'd, that, semi-blind,
He met thee on a summer day,
And took thee for his mother kind,
And frown'd as he was push'd away.

But still he saw thee shine the same,
Though he had oped his evil eye,
And found that nothing but her shame
Was left to know his mother by !

And ever since that morning sun,
He thinks of thee, and blesses Fate
That he can look with both on one
Who hath no ugliness to hate.



SONNETS.

ON MISTRESS NICELY, A PATTERN FOR HOUSEKEEPERS.

*(Written after seeing Mrs. Davenport in the
character, at Covent Garden.)*

SHE was a woman peerless in her station,
With household virtues wedded to her name ;
Spotless in linen, grass-bleached in her fame ;
And pure and clear-starched in her conversation ;
Thence in my Castle of Imagination
She dwells for evermore, the dainty dame,
To keep all airy draperies from shame,
And all dream furnitures in preservation :
There walketh she with keys quite silver bright,
In perfect hose, and shoes of seemly black,
Apron and stomacher of lily-white,
And decent order follows in her track :
The burnished plate grows lustrous in her sight,
And polished floors and tables shine her back.

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKSPEARE.

How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky,
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled

Hues of all flowers that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
Look here how honour glorifies the dead,
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of
gold !

Such is the memory of poets old,
Who on Parnassus' hill have bloomed elate ;
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
And turned to clay, whereof they were create :
But God Apollo hath them all enrolled,
And blazoned on the very clouds of fate !

TO FANCY.

MOST delicate Ariel ! submissive thing,
Won by the mind's high magic to its hest,—
Invisible embassy, or secret guest, —
Weighing the light air on a lighter wing
Whether into the midnight moon, to bring
Illuminate visions to the eye of rest,—
Or rich romances from the florid West,—
Or to the sea, for mystic whispering,—
Still by thy charmed allegiance to the will,
The fruitful wishes prosper in the brain,
As by the fingering of fairy skill,—
Moonlight, and waters, and soft music's strain,
Odours, and blooms, and *my* Miranda's smile,
Making this dull world an enchanted isle.

TO AN ENTHUSIAST.

YOUNG ardent soul, graced with fair Nature's truth,
Spring warmth of heart, and fervency of mind,
And still a large late love of all thy kind,
Spite of the world's cold practice and Time's tooth—
For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth,
Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind
Thine eyes with tears,—that thou hast not resigned
The passionate fire and freshness of thy youth :
For as the current of thy life shall flow,
Gilded by shine of sun or shadow-stained,
Through flow'ry valley or unwholesome fen,
Thrice blessed in thy joy, or in thy woe
Thrice cursed of thy race,—thou art ordained
To share beyond the lot of common men.

SONNET.

IT is not death, that sometimes in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight ;
That sometimes these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night :
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow ;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal sprite
Be lapped in alien clay and laid below ;
It is not death to know this,—but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

SONNET.

By ev'ry sweet tradition of true hearts,
Graven by Time, in love with his own lore ;
By all old martyrdoms and antique smarts,
Wherein Love died to be alive the more ;
Yea, by the sad impression on the shore,
Left by the drowned Leander, to endear
That coast for ever, where the billow's roar
Moaneth for pity in the Poet's ear ;
By Hero's faith, and the foreboding tear
That quenched her brand's last twinkle in its fall :
By Sappho's leap, and the low rustling fear
That sighed around her flight ; I swear by all,
The world shall find such pattern in my act,
As if Love's great examples still were lacked.

MIDNIGHT.

UNFATHOMABLE Night ! how dost thou sweep
Over the flooded earth, and darkly hide
The mighty city under thy full tide ;
Making a silent palace for old Sleep,
Like his own temple under the hush'd deep,
Where all the busy day he doth abide,
And forth at the late dark, outspreadeth wide
His dusky wings, whence the cold waters sweep !
How peacefully the living millions lie !
Lull'd unto death beneath his poppy spells ;
There is no breath—no living stir—no cry—
No tread of foot—no song—no music-call—
Only the sound of melancholy bells—
The voice of Time—survivor of them all !

ON RECEIVING A GIFT.

LOOK how the golden ocean shines above
Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their girth ;
So does the bright and blessed light of love
Its own things glorify, and raise their worth
As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,
And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,
Even so our tokens shine ; nay, they outshine
Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed ;
For where be ocean waves but half so clear,
So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,
As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,
That hath no dregs to be upturned by storm ?
Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,
And more than gold to doting Avarice.

SONNET.

THE curse of Adam, the old curse of all,
Though I inherit in this feverish life
Of worldly toil, vain wishes, and hard strife,
And fruitless thought, in Care's eternal thrall,
Yet more sweet honey than of bitter gall
I taste, through thee, my Eva, my sweet wife.
Then what was Man's lost Paradise?—how rife
Of bliss, since love is with him in his fall !
Such as our own pure passion still might frame
Of this fair earth, and its delightful bowers,
If no fell sorrow, like the serpent, came
To trail its venom o'er the sweetest flowers ;
But oh ! as many and such tears are ours,
As only should be shed for guilt and shame !

SONNET.

LOVE, dearest lady, such as I would speak,
Lives not within the humour of the eye ;
Not being but an outward phantasy,
That skims the surface of a tinted cheek,—
Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak,
As if the rose made summer,—and so lie
Amongst the perishable things that die,
Unlike the love which I would give and seek :
Whose health is of no hue—to feel decay
With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.
Love is its own great loveliness always,
And takes new lustre from the touch of time ;
Its bough owns no December and no May,
But bears its blossoms into Winter's clime.

SILENCE.

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound ;
No voice is hushed—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground :
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

SONNET.

WRITTEN IN KEATS' "ENDYMION."

I SAW pale Dian sitting by the brink
Of silver falls, the overflow of fountains,
From cloudy steps ; and I grew sad to think
Endymion's foot was silent on those mountains,
And he but a hush'd name, that silence keeps
In dear remembrance, lonely and forlorn,
Singing it to herself until she weeps
Tears, that perchance still glisten in the morn ;
And as I mused in dull imaginings,
There came a flash of garments, and I knew
The awful Muse by her harmonious wings
Charming the air to music as she flew—
Anon there rose an echo through the vale,
Gave back Endymion in a dreamlike tale.

SONNET.

LOVE, I am jealous of a worthless man
Whom—for his merits—thou dost hold too dear :
No better than myself, he lies as near
And precious to thy bosom. He may span
Thy sacred waist and with thy sweet breath fan
His happy cheek, and thy most willing ear
Invade with words and call his love sincere
And true as mine, and prove it—if he can :—
Not that I hate him for such deeds as this—
He were a devil to adore thee less

Who wears thy favour,—I am ill at ease
Rather lest he should e'er too coldly press
Thy gentle hand :—This is my jealousy
Making myself suspect but never thee !

SONNET.

FOR THE 14TH OF FEBRUARY.

No popular respect will I omit
To do thee honour on this happy day,
When every loyal lover tasks his wit
His simple truth in studious rhymes to pay,
And to his mistress dear his hopes convey.
Rather than know it I would still outrun
All calendars with Love's, whose date alway
Thy bright eyes govern better than the sun,—
For with thy favour was my life begun :
And still I reckon on from smiles to smiles,
And not by summers, for I thrive on none
But those thy cheerful countenance compiles.
Oh ! if it be to choose and call thee mine,
Love, thou art every day my valentine !

SONNET.

LOVE, see thy lover humbled at thy feet,
Not in servility, but homage sweet,
Gladly inclined :—and with my bended knee
Think that my inward spirit bows to thee—
More proud indeed than when I stand or climb
Elsewhere :—there is no statue so sublime

As Love's in all the world, and e'en to kiss
 The pedestal is still a better bliss
 Than all ambitions. Oh ! Love's lowest base
 Is far above the reaching of disgrace
 To shame this posture. Let me then draw nigh
 Feet that have fared so nearly to the sky,
 And when this duteous homage has been given
 I will rise up and clasp the heart in Heaven.

FALSE POETS AND TRUE.

TO WORDSWORTH.

LOOK how the lark soars upward and is gone,
 Turning a spirit as he nears the sky !
 His voice is heard, but body there is none
 To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
 So poets' songs are with us, tho' they die
 Obscured and hid by death's oblivious shroud,
 And Earth inherits the rich melody
 Like raining music from the morning cloud.
 Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud
 Their voices reach us through the lapse of space :
 The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd
 Of undistinguished birds, a twittering race ;
 But only lark and nightingale forlorn
 Fill up the silences of night and morn.

SONNET.

"Sweets to the sweet—farewell."—HAMLET.

TIME was I liked a cheesecake well enough—
 All human children have a sweetish taste ;

I used to revel in a pie, or puff,
Or tart,—we all were Tartars in our youth ;
To meet with jam or jelly was good luck,
All candies most complacently I crumped,
A stick of liquorice was good to suck,
And sugar was as often liked as lumped !
On treacle's "linked sweetness long drawn out,"
On honey I could feast like any fly ;
I thrilled when lollipops were hawked about ;
How pleased to compass hardbake or bull's-eye ;
How charmed if Fortune in my power cast
Elecampane—but that campaign is past !

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

I.

OH, 'tis a touching thing to make one weep,—
A tender infant with its curtain'd eye,
Breathing as it would neither live nor die
With that unchanging countenance of sleep !
As if its silent dream, serene and deep,
Had lined its slumber with a still blue sky
So that the passive cheeks unconscious lie
With no more life than roses—just to keep
The blushes warm, and the mild, odorous breath.
O blossom boy ! so calm is thy repose,
So sweet a compromise of life and death,
'Tis pity those fair buds should e'er unclose
For memory to stain their inward leaf,
Tinging thy dreams with unacquainted grief.

II.

Thine eyelids slept so beauteously, I deem'd
No eyes could wake so beautiful as they :
Thy rosy cheeks in such still slumbers lay,
I loved their peacefulness, nor ever dream'd
Of dimples :—for those parted lips so seem'd,
I never thought a smile could sweetlier play,
Nor that so graceful life could chase away
Thy graceful death, till those blue eyes upbeam'd.
Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drown'd,
And roses bloom more rosily for joy,
And odorous silence ripens into sound,
And fingers move to sound.—All-beauteous boy !
How thou dost waken into smiles, and prove,
If not more lovely, thou art more like Love !

TO A DECAYED SEAMAN.

HAIL ! seventy-four cut down ! Hail, top and lop ;
Unless I'm much mistaken in my notion,
Thou wast a stirring tar before that hop
Became so fatal to thy locomotion ;
Now, thrown on shore, like a mere weed of ocean,
Thou readest still to men a lesson good,
To King and Country showing thy devotion,
By kneeling thus upon a stump of wood !
Still is thy spirit strong as alcohol ;
Spite of that limb, begot of acorn-egg—
Methinks—thou Naval History in one vol.
A virtue shines, e'en in that timber leg,
For, unlike others that desert their Poll,
Thou walkest ever with thy " Constant Peg ! "

ON STEAM.

BY AN UNDER-OSTLER.

I WISH I livd a Thowsen year Ago
Wurking for Sober six and Seven milers
And dubble Stages runnen safe and slo
The Orsis cum in Them days to the Bilers
But Now by meens of Powers of Steem forces
A-turning Coches into Smoakey Kettls
The Bilers seem a Cumming to the Orses
And Helps and naggs Will sune be out of Vittels
Poor Bruits I wunder How wee bee to Liv
When sutch a change of Orses is our Faits
No nothink need Be sifted in a Siv
May them Blowd ingins all Blow up their Grates
And Theaves of Oslers crib the Coles and Giv
Their blackgard Hannimuls a feed of Slaits !

TO A SCOTCH GIRL,

WASHING LINEN AFTER HER COUNTRY FASHION.

WELL done and wetly, thou Fair Maid of Perth :
Thou mak'st a washing picture well deserving
The pen and pencilling of Washington Irving :
Like dripping Naiad, pearly from her birth,
Dashing about the water of the Firth,
To cleanse the calico of Mrs. Skirving,
And never from thy dance of duty swerving,
As there were nothing else than dirt on earth !
Yet what is thy reward ? Nay, do not start !
I do not mean to give thee a new damper,

But while thou fillest this industrious part
 Of washer, wearer, mangler, presser, stamper,
 Deserving better character—thou art
 What Bodkin would but call—"a common tramper."

ALLEGORY—A moral vehicle.—*Dictionary.*

I HAD a Gig-Horse, and I called him Pleasure,
 Because on Sundays, for a little jaunt,
 He was so fast and showy, quite a treasure ;
 Although he sometimes kicked and shied aslant.
 I had a Chaise, and christened it Enjoyment,
 With yellow body, and the wheels of red,
 Because 'twas only used for one employment,
 Namely, to go wherever Pleasure led.
 I had a wife, her nickname was Delight :
 A son called Frolic, who was never still :
 Alas ! how often dark succeeds to bright !
 Delight was thrown, and Frolic had a spill,
 Enjoyment was upset and shattered quite,
 And Pleasure fell a splitter on *Paine's Hill* !

SONNET.

' Dornton and Co. may challenge the world :
 The house of Hope, perhaps excepted."—*Road to Ruin.*

TIME was, I sat upon a lofty stool,
 At lofty desk, and with a clerkly pen
 Began each morning, at the stroke of ten,
 To write in Bell and Co.'s commercial school ;

In Warnford Court, a shady nook, and cool,
 The favourite retreat of merchant men ;
 Yet would my quill turn vagrant even then,
 And take stray dips in the Castalian pool.
 Now double entry—now a flowery trope—
 Mingling poetic honey with trade wax—
 Blogg Brothers—Milton—Grote and Prescott—
 Pope—
 Bristles—and Hogg—Glyn, Mills and Halifax—
 Rogers—and Towgood—Hemp—the Bard of Hope—
 Barilla—Byron—Tallow—Burns—and Flax !

SONNET.

TO LORD WHARNCLIFFE ON HIS GAME BILL.

I'm fond of partridges,—I'm fond of snipes,
 I'm fond of black cocks, for they're very good
 cocks—
 I'm fond of wild ducks, and I'm fond of woodcocks,
 And grouse that set up such strange moorish pipes.
 I'm fond of pheasants with their splendid stripes—
 I'm fond of hares, whether from Whig or Tory--
 I'm fond of capercalxies in their glory,—
 Teal, widgeons, plovers, birds in all their types,
 All these are in your care, Law-giving Peer,
 And when you next address your Lordly Babel,
 Some clause put in your Bill, precise and clear,
 With due and fit provision to enable
 A man that holds all kinds of game so dear
 To keep, like Crockford, a good Gaming Table !

SONNET.

THE sky is glowing in one ruddy sheet ;—
A cry of fire ! resounds from door to door ;
And westward still the thronging people pour ;—
The turncock hastens to F. P. 6 feet,
And quick unlocks the fountains of the street ;
While rumbling engines, with increasing roar,
Thunder along to luckless number Four,
Where Mr. Dough makes bread for folks to eat.
And now through blazing frames and fiery beams,
The Globe, the Sun, the Phoenix, and what not,
With gushing pipes throw up abundant streams,
On burning bricks, and twists, on rolls—too
hot—
And scorching loaves,—as if there were no shorter
And cheaper way of making toast and water !

SONNET.

ALONG the Woodford road there comes a noise
Of wheels, and Mr. Rounding's neat post-chaise
Struggles along, drawn by a pair of bays,
With Rev. Mr. Crow and six small boys ;
Who ever and anon declare their joys,
With trumping horns, and juvenile huzzas,
At going home to spend their Christmas days,
And changing Learning's pains for Pleasure's toys.
Six weeks elapse, and down the Woodford way,
A heavy coach drags six more heavy souls,

But no glad urchins shout, no trumpets bray,
The carriage makes a halt, the gate-bell tolls,
And little boys walk in as dull and mum
As six new scholars to the Deaf and Dumb !

TO A CRITIC.

O CRUEL One ! How littel dost thou know
How manye poetes with unhappynesse
Thou mayest have slaine ; ere they beganne to
blowe
Like to yonge Buddes in theyre first sappynesse !
Even as Pinkes from littel Pipinges growe
Great Poetes yet may come of singinges small,
Which, if an hungrede Worme doth gnawe belowe,
Fold up theyre striped leaves, and dye withalle.
Alake, that pleasaunt Flowre must fayde and falle
Because a Grubbe hath ete into yts Hede,—
That els had growne soe fayre and eke so talle
To wardes the Heaven, and opened forthe and
sprede
Its blossomes to the Sunne for Menne to rede
In soe brighte hues of Loveliness indeede !



THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

A ROMANCE.



PART I.

SOME dreams we have are nothing else but dreams,
Unnatural, and full of contradictions ;
Yet others of our most romantic schemes
Are something more than fictions.

It might be only on enchanted ground ;
It might be merely by a thought's expansion ;
But, in the spirit or the flesh, I found
An old deserted Mansion.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
A dwelling-place,—and yet no habitation ;
A House,—but under some prodigious ban
Of Excommunication.

Unhinged the iron gates half open hung,
Jarr'd by the gusty gales of many winters,
That from its crumbled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters.

No dog was at the threshold, great or small ;
No pigeon on the roof—no household creature—
No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirr'd, to go or come,
No face look'd forth from shut or open casement ;
No chimney smoked—there was no sign of Home
From parapet to basement.

With shatter'd panes the grassy court was starr'd :
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after !
And thro' the ragged roof the sky shone, barr'd
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear ;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The flow'r grew wild and rankly as the weed,
Roses with thistles struggled for espial,
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed,
Had overgrown the Dial.

But gay or gloomy, steadfast or infirm,
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration ;
All times and tides were lost in one long term
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the Porch, she found
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough ;
And on the lawn,—within its turfy mound,—
The rabbit made his burrow.

The rabbit wild and grey, that flitted thro'
The shrubby clumps, and frisk'd, and sat, and van-
ished
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew
His enemy was banish'd.

The wary crow,—the pheasant from the woods—
Lull'd by the still and everlasting sameness,
Close to the mansion, like domestic broods,
Fed with a "shocking tameness."

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted ;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, alighted.

The moping heron, motionless and stiff,
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard except, from far away,
The ringing of the witwall's shrilly laughter,
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,
That Echo murmur'd after.

But Echo never mock'd the human tongue ;
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,
A secret curse on that old Building hung
And its deserted Garden.

The beds were all untouch'd by hand or tool ;
No footstep marked the damp and mossy gravel,
Each walk as green as is the mantled pool,
For want of human travel.

The vine unpruned, and the neglected peach,
Droop'd from the wall with which they used to
grapple ;
And on the kanker'd tree, in easy reach,
Rotted the golden apple,

But awfully the truant shunn'd the ground,
The vagrant kept aloof, and daring poacher,
In spite of gaps that thro' the fences round
Invited the encroacher.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The pear and quince lay squander'd on the grass ;
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of bloomy plums—a Wilderness it was
Of fruits, and weeds, and flowers !

The marigold amidst the nettles blew,
The gourd embraced the rose-bush in its ramble ;
The thistle and the stock together grew,
The holly-hock and bramble.

The bear-bine with the lilac interlaced,
The sturdy bur-dock choked its slender neighbour,
The spicy pink. All tokens were effaced
Of human care and labour.

The very yew Formality had train'd
To such a rigid pyramidal stature,
For want of trimming had almost regain'd
The raggedness of nature.

The Fountain was a-dry—neglect and time
Had marr'd the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,
Sprawl'd in the ruin'd bason.

The Statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves, and herbage rotten,
Lay like the Idol of some bygone race,
Its name and rites forgotten.

On ev'ry side the aspect was the same,
All ruin'd, desolate, forlorn and savage :
No hand or foot within the precinct came
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

PART II.

O very gloomy is the House of Woe,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That Death is in the dwelling.

O very, very dreary is the room
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,
But, smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The Corpse lies on the trestles !

But House of Woe, and hearse, and sable pall,
The narrow home of the departed mortal,
Ne'er look'd so gloomy as that Ghostly Hall,
With its deserted portal !

The centipede along the threshold crept,
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,

And in its winding sheet the maggot slept,
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood,
The emmets of the steps had old possession,
And marched in search of their diurnal food
In undisturbed procession.

As undisturb'd as the prehensile cell
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue,
For never foot upon that threshold fell,
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

Howbeit, the door I push'd—or so I dream'd—
Which slowly, slowly gaped,—the hinges creaking
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed
That Time himself was speaking.

But 'Time was dumb within that Mansion old,
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners,
That hung from the corroded walls, and told
Of former men and manners :—

Those tatter'd flags, that with the open'd door,
Seem'd the old wave of battle to remember,
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor,
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out,—bird after bird,
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,

And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter !

A shriek that echo'd from the joisted roof,
And up the stair, and further still and further,
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof
It ceased its tale of murder !

Meanwhile the rusty armour rattled round,
The banner shudder'd, and the ragged streamer ;
All things the horrid tenor of the sound
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers, where the helmet hung, and belt,
Stirr'd as the tempest stirs the forest branches,
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt
The bloodhound at his haunches.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,
And thro' its many gaps of destitution
Dolorous moans and hollow sighings came,
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball,
Touch'd by some impulse occult or mechanic ;
And nameless beetles ran along the wall
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that from overhead
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,
Suddenly turn'd and up its slender thread
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall
Assuming features solemn and terrific,

Hinted some Tragedy of that old Hall,
Lock'd up in hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the
doubt,
Wherefore amongst those flags so dull and livid,
The banner of the BLOODY HAND shone out
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal,
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver ;
And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel
So ague-like a shiver.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted ;
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

If but a rat had linger'd in the house,
To lure the thought into a social channel !
But not a rat remain'd, or tiny mouse,
To squeak behind the panel.

Huge drops roll'd down the walls, as if they wept ;
And where the cricket used to chirp so shrilly,
The toad was squatting, and the lizard crept
On that damp hearth and chilly.

For years no cheerful blaze had sparkled there,
Or glanced on coat of buff or knightly metal ;
The slug was crawling on the vacant chair,—
The snail upon the settle.

The floor was redolent of mould and must,
The fungus in the rotten seams had quicken'd ;
While on the oaken table coats of dust
Perennially had thicken'd.

No mark of leathern jack or metal can,
No cup—no horn—no hospitable token,—
All social ties between that board and Man
Had long ago been broken.

There was so foul a rumour in the air,
The shadow of a presence so atrocious :
No human creature could have feasted there,
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

PART III.

'Tis hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason or from impulse only—
But some internal prompting bade me mount
The gloomy stairs and lonely.

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp, and cold,
With odours as from bones and relics carnal,
Deprived of right, and consecrated mould,
The chapel vault or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress
Of ev'ry step so many echoes blended,
The mind, with dark misgivings, feared to guess
How many feet ascended.

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,
As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,
With leaves that rankly rotted. .

The air was thick—and in the upper gloom
The bat—or something in its shape—was winging
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb
The Death's-Head moth was clinging.

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly ;
And with a grim significance flits round
The taper burning bluely.

Such omens in the place there seem'd to be,
At ev'ry crooked turn, or on the landing,
The straining eyeball was prepared to see
Some Apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted.

Yet no portentous Shape the sight amazed ;
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid ;
But from their tarnish'd frames dark Figures gazed,
And Faces spectre-pallid.

Not merely with the mimic life that lies
Within the compass of Art's simulation ;
Their souls were looking thro' their painted eyes
With awful speculation.

On ev'ry lip a speechless horror dwelt ;
On ev'ry brow the burthen of affliction ;
The old Ancestral Spirits knew and felt
The House's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,
They might have stirr'd, or sigh'd, or wept, or spoken ;
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,
Except my steps in solitary clamber,
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,
From chamber into chamber.

Deserted rooms of luxury and state,
That old magnificence had richly furnish'd
With pictures, cabinets of ancient date,
And carvings gilt and burnish'd.

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art
With Scripture history, or classic fable ;
But all had faded, save one ragged part,
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth
Had marr'd the tissue with a partial ravage ;
But undecaying frown'd upon the cloth
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale ; the cloud a thing of doubt ;
Some hues were fresh, and some decay'd and duller ;
But still the BLOODY HAND shone strangely out
With vehemence of colour !

The BLOODY HAND that with a lurid stain
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,
Projected from the casement's painted pane,
Where all beside was broken.

The BLOODY HAND significant of crime,
That glaring on the old heraldic banner,
Had kept its crimson unimpaired by time,
In such a wondrous manner.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The Death Watch tick'd behind the panell'd oak,
Inexplicable tremors shook the arras,
And echoes strange and mystical awoke,
The fancy to embarrass.

Prophetic hints that fill'd the soul with dread,
But thro' one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,
The while some secret inspiration said,
That Chamber is the Ghostly !

Across the door no gossamer festoon
Swung pendulous—no web—no dusty fringes,
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunn'd the interdicted room,
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banish'd,
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom
The very midge had vanish'd.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a Bed,
As if with awful aim direct and certain,
To show the BLOODY HAND in burning red
Embroidered on the curtain.

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt—
The pillow in its place had slowly rotted ;
The floor alone retain'd the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence
With mazy doubles to the grated casement—
Oh what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement !

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance ?
Had sought the door, the window in his flight,
Striving for dear existence ?

What shrieking Spirit in that bloody room
Its mortal frame had violently quitted ?—
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,
A ghostly Shadow flitted.

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,
But painted on the air so very dimly,
It hardly veil'd the tapestry at all,
Or portrait frowning grimly.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

MISS KILMANSEGG AND HER
PRECIOUS LEG.

(*A Golden Legend.*)

HER PEDIGREE.

To trace the Kilmansegg pedigree
To the very root of the family tree
Were a task as rash as ridiculous :
Through antediluvian mists as thick
As London fog such a line to pick
Were enough, in truth, to puzzle old Nick,—
Not to name Sir Harris Nicholas.

It wouldn't require much verbal strain
To trace the Kil-man, perchance, to Cain,
But, waiving all such digressions,
Suffice it, according to family lore,
A Patriarch Kilmansegg lived of yore,
Who was famed for his great possessions.

Tradition said he feather'd his nest
Through an Agricultural Interest
In the Golden Age of farming ;
When golden eggs were laid by the geese,
And Colchian sheep wore a golden fleece,
And golden pippins—the sterling kind
Of Hesperus—now so hard to find—
Made Horticulture quite charming !

A Lord of Land, on his own estate,
He lived at a very lively rate,
But his income would bear carousing ;

Such acres he had of pasture and heath,
With herbage so rich from the ore beneath,
The very ewes' and lambkins' teeth
Were turn'd into gold by browsing.

He gave, without any extra thrift,
A flock of sheep for a birthday gift
To each son of his loins, or daughter :
And his debts—if debts he had—at will
He liquidated by giving each bill
A dip in Pactolian water.

'Twas said that even his pigs of lead,
By crossing with some by Midas bred,
Made a perfect mine of his piggery.
And as for cattle, one yearling bull
Was worth all Smithfield-market full
Of the Golden Bulls of Pope Gregory.

The high-bred horses within his stud,
Like human creatures of birth and blood,
Had their Golden Cups and flagons :
And as for the common husbandry nags,
Their noses were tied in money-bags,
When they stopp'd with the carts and
waggon.

Moreover, he had a Golden Ass,
Sometimes at stall, and sometimes at grass,
That was worth his own weight in money—
And a golden hive, on a Golden Bank,
Where golden bees, by alchemical prank,
Gather'd gold instead of honey.

Gold ! and gold ! and gold without end !
He had gold to lay by, and gold to spend,
Gold to give, and gold to lend,

And reversions of gold *in futuro*.

In wealth the family revell'd and roll'd,
Himself and wife and sons so bold ;—
And his daughters sang to their harps of gold
“ O bella eta del' oro ! ”

Such was the tale of the Kilmansegg Kin,
In golden text on a vellum skin,
Though certain people would wink and grin,
And declare the whole story a parable—
That the Ancestor rich was one Jacob Ghrimes,
Who held a long lease, in prosperous times,
Of acres, pasture and arable.

That as money makes money, his golden bees
Were the Five per Cents., or which you please
When his cash was more than plenty—
That the golden cups were racing affairs ;
And his daughters, who sang Italian airs,
Had their golden harps of Clementi.

That the Golden Ass, or Golden Bull,
Was English John, with his pockets full,
Then at war by land and water :
While beef, and mutton, and other meat,
Were almost as dear as money to eat,
And Farmers reaped Golden Harvests of wheat
At the Lord knows what per quarter !

HER BIRTH.

What different dooms our birthdays bring :
For instance, one little mannikin thing

Survives to wear many a wrinkle ;
While Death forbids another to wake,
And a son that it took nine moons to make
Expires without even a twinkle !

Into this world we come like ships,
Launch'd from the docks, and stocks, and
slips,
For fortune fair or fatal ;
And one little craft is cast away
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
While another rides safe at Port Natal.

What different lots our stars accord !
This babe to be hail'd and woo'd as a lord !
And that to be shunn'd like a leper !
One, to the world's wine, honey, and corn,
Another, like Colchester native, born
To its vinegar, only, and pepper.

One is litter'd under a roof
Neither wind nor water proof—
That's the prose of Love in a Cottage—
A puny, naked, shivering wretch,
The whole of whose birthright would not fetch,
Though Robins himself drew up the sketch,
The bid of "a mess of pottage."

Born of Fortunatus's kin,
Another comes tenderly usher'd in
To a prospect all bright and burnish'd :
No tenant he for life's back slums—
He comes to the world, as a gentleman comes
To a lodging ready furnish'd.

And the other sex—the tender—the fair—
What wide reverses of fate are there !
Whilst Margaret, charm'd by the Bulbul rare,
In a garden of Gul reposes—
Poor Peggy hawks nose-gays from street to
street
Till—think of that, who find life so sweet !—
She hates the smell of roses !

Not so with the infant Kilmansegg !
She was not born to steal or beg,
Or gather cresses in ditches ;
To plait the straw, or bind the shoe,
Or sit all day to hem and sew,
As females must—and not a few—
To fill their insides with stitches !

She was not doom'd, for bread to eat,
To be put to her hands as well as her feet—
To carry home linen from mangles—
Or heavy-hearted, and weary-limb'd,
To dance on a rope in a jacket trimm'd
With as many blows as spangles.

She was one of those who by Fortune's boon
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle :
To speak according to poet's wont,
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,
And Midas rock'd the cradle.

At her first *début* she found her head
On a pillow of down, in a downy bed,
With a damask canopy over.

For although, by the vulgar popular saw,
All mothers are said to be "in the straw,"
Some children are born in clover.

Her very first draught of vital air,
It was not the common chameleon fare
Of plebeian lungs and noses,—
No—her earliest sniff
Of this world was a whiff
Of the genuine Otto of Roses !

When she saw the light, it was no mere ray
Of that light so common—so everyday—
That the sun each morning launches—
But six wax tapers dazzled her eyes,
From a thing—a gooseberry bush for size—
With a golden stem and branches.

She was born exactly at half-past two,
As witness'd a timepiece in or-molu
That stood on a marble table—
Showing at once the time of day,
And a team of *Gildings* running away
As fast as they were able,
With a golden God, with a golden Star,
And a golden Spear, in a golden Car,
According to Grecian fable.

Like other babes, at her birth she cried ;
Which made a sensation far and wide—
Ay, for twenty miles around her ;
For though to the ear 'twas nothing more
Than an infant's squall, it was really the roar

Of a Fifty-thousand Pounder !
It shook the next heir
In his library chair,
And made him cry, " Confound her ! "

Of signs and omens there was no dearth,
Any more than at Owen Glendower's birth,
Or the advent of other great people :
Two bullocks dropp'd dead,
As if knock'd on the head,
And barrels of stout
And ale ran about,
And the village-bells such a peal rang out,
That they crack'd the village-steeple.

In no time at all, like mushroom spawn,
Tables sprang up all over the lawn ;
Not furnish'd scantily or shabbily,
But on scale as vast
As that huge repast,
With its loads and cargoes
Of drink and botargoes,
At the birth of the Babe in Rabelais.

Hundreds of men were turn'd into beasts,
Like the guests at Circe's horrible feasts,
By the magic of ale and cider :
And each country lass, and each country lad,
Began to caper and dance like mad,
And ev'n some old ones appear'd to have had
A bite from the Naples Spider.

Then as night came on
It had scared King John

Who considered such signs not risible,
To have seen the maroons,
And the whirling moons,
And the serpents of flame,
And wheels of the same,
That according to some wére "whizzable."

Oh, happy Hope of the Kilmanseggs !
Thrice happy in head, and body, and legs,
That her parents had such full pockets !
For had she been born of Want and Thrift,
For care and nursing all adrift,
It's ten to one she had had to make shift,
With rickets instead of rockets !

And how was the precious baby drest ?
In a robe of the East, with lace of the West,
Like one of Crœsus's issue—
Her best bibs were made
Of rich gold brocade,
And the others of silver tissue.

And when the Baby inclined to nap,
She was lull'd on a Gros de Naples lap,
By a nurse in a modish Paris cap,
Of notions so exalted,
She drank nothing lower than Curaçoa,
Maraschino, or pink Noyau,
And on principle never malted.

From a golden boat, with a golden spoon,
The babe was fed night, morning, and noon ;
And although the tale seems fabulous,

'Tis said her tops and bottoms were gilt,
Like the oats in that Stable-yard Palace built
For the Horse of Heliogabalus.

And when she took to squall and kick—
For pain will ring and pins will prick,
E'en the wealthiest nabob's daughter—
They gave her no vulgar Dalby or gin,
But a liquor with leaf of gold therein,
Videlicet,—Dantzic Water.

In short, she was born, and bred, and nurst,
And drest in the best from the very first,
To please the genteelest censor—
And then, as soon as strength would allow,
Was vaccinated, as babes are now,
With virus ta'en from the best-bred cow
Of Lord Althorpe's—now Earl Spencer.

HER CHRISTENING.

Though Shakspeare asks us, "What's in a name?"
(As if cognomens were much the same),

There's really a very great scope in it.
A name?—why, wasn't there Doctor Dodd,
That servant at once of Mammon and God,
Who found four thousand pounds and odd,
A prison—a cart—and a rope in it?

A name?—if the party had a voice,
What mortal would be a Bugg by choice?
As a Hogg, a Grubb, or a Chubb rejoice?
Or any such nauseous blazon?

Not to mention many a vulgar name,
That would make a door-plate blush for shame,
If door-plates were not so brazen ?

A name?—it has more than nominal worth,
And belongs to good or bad luck at birth
As dames of a certain degree know.
In spite of his Page's hat and hose,
His Page's jacket, and buttons in rows
Bob only sounds like a page in prose
Till turned into Rupertino.

Now to christen the infant Kilmansegg,
For days and days it was quite a plague,
To hunt the list in the Lexicon :
And scores were tried, like coin, by the ring,
Ere names were found just the proper thing
For a minor rich as a Mexican.

Then cards were sent the presence to beg
Of all the kin of Kilmansegg,
White, yellow, and brown relations :
Brothers, Wardens of City Halls,
And Uncles—rich as three Golden Balls
From taking pledges of nations.

Nephews, whom Fortune seem'd to bewitch,
Rising in life like rockets—
Nieces, whose doweries knew no hitch—
Aunts, as certain of dying rich !
As candles in golden sockets—
Cousins German and Cousins' sons,
All thriving and opulent, some had tons
Of Kentish hops in their pockets !

For money had stuck to the race through life
(As it did to the bushel when cash so rife
Posed Ali Baba's brother's wife)—

And down to the Cousins and Coz-lings,
The fortunate brood of the Kilmanseggs,
As if they had come out of golden eggs,
Were all as wealthy as "Goslings."

- It would fill a Court Gazette to name
What East and West End people came
To the rite of Christianity :
The lofty Lord, and the titled Dame,
All di'monds, plumes, and urbanity :
His Lordship the May'r with his golden chain,
And two Gold Sticks, and the Sheriff's twain.
Nine foreign Counts, and other great men
With their orders and stars, to help "M. or N."
To renounce all pomp and vanity.

To paint the maternal Kilmansegg
The pen of an Eastern Poet would beg,
And need an elaborate sonnet ;
How she sparkled with gems whenever she stirr'd,
And her head niddle-noddled at every word,
And seem'd so happy, a Paradise Bird
Had nidificated upon it.

And Sir Jacob the Father strutted and bow'd,
And smiled to himself, and laugh'd aloud,
To think of his heiress and daughter—
And then in his pockets he made a grope,
And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,
Seem'd washing his hands with invisible soap
In imperceptible water.

He had roll'd in money like pigs in mud,
Till it seem'd to have enter'd into his blood

By some occult projection :
And his cheeks instead of a healthy hue,
As yellow as any guinea grew,
Making the common phrase seem true,
About a rich complexion.

And now came the nurse, and during a pause,
Her dead-leaf satin would fitly cause

A very autumnal rustle—
So full of figure, so full of fuss,
As she carried about the babe to buss,
She seem'd to be nothing but bustle.

A wealthy Nabob was Godpapa,
And an Indian Begum was Godmamma,
Whose jewels a Queen might covet—
And the Priest was a Vicar, and Dean withal
Of that Temple we see with a Golden Ball,
And a Golden Cross above it.

The Font was a bowl of American gold,
Won by Raleigh in days of old,

In spite of Spanish bravado ;
And the Book of Pray'r was so overrun
With gilt devices, it shone in the sun
Like a copy—a presentation one—
Of Humboldt's " El Dorado. "

Gold ! and gold ! and nothing but gold !
The same auriferous shine behold
Wherever the eye could settle !

On the walls—the sideboard—the ceiling-sky—
On the gorgeous footmen standing by,
In coats to delight a miner's eye
 With seams of the precious metal.

Gold ! and gold ! and besides the gold,
The very robe of the infant told
A tale of wealth in every fold,
 It lapp'd her like a vapour !
So fine ! so thin ! the mind at a loss
Could compare it to nothing except a cross
 Of cobweb with bank-note paper.

Then her pearls—'twas a perfect sight forsooth
To see them, like "the dew of her youth,"
 In such a plentiful sprinkle.
Meanwhile, the Vicar read through the form,
And gave her another, not overwarm,
 That made her little eyes twinkle.

Then the babe was cross'd and bless'd amain !
But instead of the Kate, or Ann, or Jane,
 Which the humbler female endorses—
Instead of one name, as some people prefix,
Kilmansegg went at the tails of six,
 Like a carriage of state with its horses.

Oh, then the kisses she got and hugs !
The golden mugs and the golden jugs
 That lent fresh rays to the midges :
The golden knives, and the golden spoons,
The gems that sparkled like fairy boons,
It was one of the Kilmansegg's own saloons,
 But look'd like Rundell and Bridge's !

Gold ! and gold ! the new and the old,
The company ate and drank from gold,
They revell'd, they sang, and were merry ;
And one of the Gold Sticks rose from his chair,
And toasted " the Lass with the golden hair "
In a bumper of Golden Sherry.

Gold ! still gold ! it rain'd on the nurse,
Who—unlike Danæ—was none the worse !
There was nothing but guineas glistening !
Fifty were given to Doctor James,
For calling the little Baby names ;
And for saying, Amen !
The Clerk had ten,
And that was the end of the Christening.

HER CHILDHOOD.

Our youth ! our childhood ! that spring of springs !
'Tis surely one of the blessedest things
That nature ever invented ?
When the rich are wealthy beyond their wealth,
And the poor are rich in spirits and health,
And all with their lots contented !

There's little Phelim, he sings like a thrush,
In the selfsame pair of patchwork plush,
With the selfsame empty pockets,
That tempted his daddy so often to cut
His throat, or jump in the water-butt—
But what cares Phelim ? an empty nut
Would sooner bring tears to their sockets.

Give him a collar without a skirt,
(That's the Irish linen for shirt)
And a slice of bread with a taste of dirt,
(That's Poverty's Irish butter),
And what does he lack to make him blest?
Some oyster-shells, or a sparrow's nest,
A candle-end, and a gutter.

But to leave the happy Phelim alone,
Gnawing, perchance, a marrowless bone,
For which no dog would quarrel—
Turn we to little Miss Kilmansegg
Cutting her first little toothy-peg
With a fifty-guinea coral—
A peg upon which
About poor and rich
Reflection might hang a moral.

Born in wealth, and wealthily nursed,
Capp'd, papp'd, napp'd, and lapp'd from the first
On the knees of Prodigality,
Her childhood was one eternal round
Of the game of going on Tickler's ground
Picking up gold—in reality.

With extempore cartes she never play'd,
Or the odds and ends of a Tinker's trade,
Or little dirt pies and puddings made,
Like children happy and squalid ;
The very puppet she had to pet,
Like a bait for the " Nix my Dolly " set,
Was a Dolly of gold—and solid !

Gold ! and gold ! twas the burden still !
To gain the Heiress's early goodwill
There was much corruption and bribery—
The yearly cost of her golden toys
Would have given half London's Charity Boys
And Charity Girls the annual joys
Of a holiday dinner at Highbury.

Bon-bons she ate from the gilt *cornet* ;
And gilded queens on St. Bartlemy's day ;
Till her fancy was tinged by her presents—
And first a Goldfinch excited her wish,
Then a spherical bowl with its Golden fish,
And then two Golden Pheasants.

Nay, once she squall'd and scream'd like wild—
And it shows how the bias we give to a child
Is a thing most weighty and solemn :—
But whence was wonder or blame to spring
If little Miss K.—after such a swing—
Made a dust for the flaming gilded thing
On the top of the Fish Street column ?

HER EDUCATION.

According to metaphysical creed,
To the earliest books that children read
For much good or much bad they are debtors—
But before with their A B C they start,
There are things in morals, as well as art,
That play a very important part—
“ Impressions before the letters.”

Dame Education begins the pile,
Mayhap in the graceful Corinthian style,
But alas for the elevation !
If the Lady's maid or Gossip the Nurse
With a load of rubbish, or something worse,
Have made a rotten foundation.

Even thus with little Miss Kilmansegg,
Before she learnt her E for egg,
Ere her Governess came, or her masters—
Teachers of quite a different kind
Had "cramm'd" her beforehand, and put her mind
In a go-cart on golden castors.

Long before her A B and C,
They had taught her by heart her L. S. D.,
And as how she was born a great Heiress ;
And as sure as London is built of bricks,
My Lord would ask her the day to fix,
To ride in a fine gilt coach and six,
Like Her Worship the Lady May'ress.

Instead of stories from Edgeworth's page
The true golden lore for our golden age,
Or lessons from Barbauld and Trimmer,
Teaching the worth of Virtue and Health,
All that she knew was the Virtue of Wealth,
Provided by vulgar nursery stealth,
With a Book of Leaf Gold for a Primer.

The very metal of merit they told,
And praised her for being as "good as gold !"
Till she grew as a peacock haughty ;

Of money they talk'd the whole day round,
And weigh'd desert, like grapes, by the pound,
Till she had an idea from the very sound
That people with nought were naughty.

They praised—poor children with nothing at all !
Lord ! how you twaddle and waddle and squall
Like common-bred geese and ganders !
What sad little bad little figures you make
To the rich Miss K., whose plainest seed-cake
Was stuff'd with corianders !

They praised her falls, as well as her walk,
Flatterers make cream cheese of chalk,
They praised—how they praised—her very small
talk,
As if it fell from a Solon ;
Or the girl who at each pretty phrase let drop
A ruby comma, or pearl full-stop,
Or an emerald semi-colon.

They praised her spirit, and now and then
The Nurse brought her own little “ nevy ” Ben,
To play with the future May'ress,
And when he got raps, and taps, and slaps,
Scratches, and pinches, snips, and snaps,
As if from a Tigress, or Bearress,
They told him how Lords would court that hand,
And always gave him to understand,
While he rubb'd, poor soul,
His carrotty poll,
That his hair had been pull'd by “ a *Hairess*.”

Such were the lessons from maid and nurse,
A Governess help'd to make still worse,
Giving an appetite so perverse

Fresh diet whereon to batten—
Beginning with A B C to hold
Like a royal playbill printed in gold
On a square of pearl-white satin.

The books to teach the verbs and nouns,
And those about countries, cities, and towns,
Instead of their sober drabs and browns,
Were in crimson silk, with gilt edges ;—
Her Butler, and Enfield, and Entick—in short
Her “ Early Lessons ” of every sort,

Look'd like Souvenirs, Keepsakes, and Pledges.

Old Johnson shone out in as fine array
As he did one night when he went to the play ;
Chambaud like a beau of King Charles's day—

Lindley Murray in like conditions—
Each weary, unwelcome, irksome task,
Appear'd in a fancy dress and a mask ;—
If you wish for similar copies, ask
For Howell and James's Editions.

Novels she read to amuse her mind,
But always the affluent match-making kind
That ends with Promessi Sposi,
And a father-in-law so wealthy and grand,
He could give cheque-mate to Coutts in the Strand,
So, along with a ring and posy,
He endows the Bride with Golconda offhand,
And gives the Groom Potosi.

Plays she perused—but she liked the best
Those comedy gentlefolks always possess'd
Of fortunes so truly romantic—
Of money so ready that right or wrong
It always is ready to go for a song,
Throwing it, going it, pitching it strong—
They ought to have purses as green and long
As the cucumber call'd the Gigantic.

Then Eastern Tales she loved for the sake
Of the Purse of Oriental make,
And the thousand pieces they put in it—
But Pastoral scenes on her heart fell cold,
For Nature with her had lost its hold,
No field but the Field of the Cloth of Gold
Would ever have caught her foot in it.

What more? She learnt to sing, and dance,
To sit on a horse although he should prance,
And to speak a French not spoken in France
Any more than at Babel's building—
And she painted shells, and flowers, and Turks,
But her great delight was in Fancy Works
That are done with gold or gilding.

Gold ! still gold !—the bright and the dead,
With golden beads, and gold lace, and gold thread,
She work'd in gold, as if for her bread ;
The metal had so undermined her,
Gold ran in her thoughts and fill'd her brain,
She was golden-headed as Peter's cane
With which he walk'd behind her.

HER ACCIDENT.

The horse that carried Miss Kilmansegg,
And a better never lifted leg,

Was a very rich bay, call'd Banker—
A horse of a breed and mettle so rare,—
By Bullion out of an Ingot mare,—
That for action, the best of figures, and air,
It made many good judges hanker.

And when she took a ride in the Park,
Equestrian Lord, or pedestrian Clerk,
Was thrown in an amorous fever,
To see the Heiress how well she sat,
With her groom behind her, Bob or Nat,
In green, half smothered with gold, and a hat
With more gold lace than beaver.

And then when Banker obtain'd a pat,
To see how he arch'd his neck at that !
He snorted with pride and pleasure !
Like the Steed in the fable so lofty and grand,
Who gave the poor Ass to understand,
That *he* didn't carry a bag of sand,
But a burden of golden treasure.

A load of treasure?—alas ! alas !
Had her horse but been fed upon English grass,
And shelter'd in Yorkshire spinneys,
Had he scour'd the sand with the Desert Ass,
Or where the American whinnies—
But a hunter from Erin's turf and gorse,
A regular thoroughbred Irish horse,
Why, he ran away, as a matter of course,
With a girl worth her weight in guineas !

Mayhap 'tis the trick of such pamper'd nags
To shy at the sight of a beggar in rags,—

But away, like the bolt of a rabbit,—
Away went the horse in the madness of fright,
And away went the horsewoman mocking the
sight—

Was yonder blue flash a flash of blue light,
Or only the skirt of her habit?

Away she flies, with the groom behind,—
It looks like a race of the Calmuck kind,

When Hymen himself is the starter,
And the Maid rides first in the fourfooted strife,
Riding, striding, as if for her life,
While the Lover rides after to catch him a wife,
Although it's catching a Tartar.

But the Groom has lost his glittering hat!
Though he does not sigh and pull up for that—
Alas! his horse is a tit for Tat

To sell to a very low bidder—
His wind is ruin'd, his shoulder is sprung,
Things, though a horse be handsome and young,
A purchaser *will* consider.

But still flies the Heiress through stones and dust,
Oh, for a fall, if fall she must,

On the gentle lap of Flora!
But still, thank Heaven; she clings to her seat—
Away! away! she could ride a dead heat
With the Dead who ride so fast and fleet,
In the Ballad of Leonora!

Away she gallops,—it's awful work !
It's faster than Turpin's ride to York,
On Bess that notable clipper !
She has circled the Ring !—she crosses the Park !
Mazeppa, although he was stripp'd so stark,
Mazeppa couldn't outstrip her !

The fields seemed running away with the folks !
The Elms are having a race for the Oaks
At a pace that all Jockeys disparages !
All, all is racing ! the Serpentine
Seems rushing past like the "arrowy Rhine,"
The houses have got on a railway line,
And are off like the first-class carriages !

She'll lose her life ! she is losing her breath !
A cruel chase, she is chasing Death,
As female shriekings forewarn her ;
And now—as gratis as blood of Guelph—
She clears that gate, which has clear'd itself
Since then, at Hyde Park Corner !

Alas ! for the hope of the Kilmanseggs !
For her head, her brains, her body, and legs,
Her life's not worth a copper !

Willy-nilly,
In Piccadilly,
A hundred hearts turn sick and chilly,
A hundred voices cry, "Stop her !"
And one old gentleman stares and stands,
Shakes his head and lifts his hands,
And says, "How very improper !"

On and on !—what a perilous run !
The iron rails seem all mingling in one,

To shut out the Green Park scenery !
And now the Cellar its dangers reveals,
She shudders—she shrieks—she's doom'd, she feels,
To be torn by powers of horses and wheels,
Like a spinner by steam machinery !

Sick with horror she shuts her eyes,
But the very stones seem uttering cries,
As they did to that Persian daughter,
When she climb'd up the steep vociferous hill,
Her little silver flagon to fill
With the magical Golden Water !

“ Batter her ! shatter her !
Throw and scatter her ! ”
Shouts each stony-hearted chatterer !
“ Dash at the heavy Dover !
Spill her ! kill her ! tear and tatter her !
Smash her ! crash her ! ” (the stones didn't flatter
her !)
“ Kick her brains out ! let her blood spatter her !
Roll on her over and over ! ”

For so she gather'd the awful sense
Of the street in its past unmacadamised tense,
As the wild horse overran it,—
His four heels making the clatter of six,
Like a Devil's tattoo play'd with iron sticks
On a kettle-drum of granite !

On ! still on ! she's dazzled with hints
Of oranges, ribbons, and colour'd prints,

A Kaleidoscope jumble of shapes and tints,
 And human faces all flashing,
 Bright and brief as the sparks from the flints,
 That the desperate hoof keeps dashing !

On and on ! still frightfully fast !
 Dover Street, Bond Street, all are past !
 But—yes—no—yes !—they're down at last !
 The Furies and Fates have found them !
 Down they go with sparkle and crash,
 Like a Bark that's struck by the lightning flash—
 There's a shriek—and a sob—
 And the dense dark mob
 Like a billow closes around them !

“ She breathes ! ”

“ She don't ! ”

“ She'll recover ! ”

“ She won't ! ”

“ She's stirring ! she's living, by Nemesis ! ”
 Gold ! still gold ! on counter and shelf !
 Golden dishes as plenty as delf ;
 Miss Kilmansegg's coming again to herself
 On an opulent Goldsmith's premises !

Gold ! fine gold !—both yellow and red,
 Beaten, and molten—polish'd, and dead—
 To see the gold with profusion spread
 In all forms of its manufacture !
 But what avails gold to Miss Kilmansegg,
 When the femoral bone of her dexter leg
 Has met with a compound fracture ?

Gold may soothe Adversity's smart ;
Nay, help to bind up a broken heart ;
But to try it on any other part

Were as certain a disappointment,
As if one should rub the dish and plate,
Taken out of a Staffordshire crate—
In the hope of a Golden Service of State—
With Singleton's "Golden Ointment."

HER PRECIOUS LEG.

"As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined,"
Is an adage often recall'd to mind,
Referring to juvenile bias :
And never so well is the verity seen,
As when to the weak, warp'd side we lean,
While Life's tempests and hurricanes try us.

Even thus with Miss K. and her broken limb :
By a very, very remarkable whim,
She show'd her early tuition :
While the buds of character came into blow
With a certain tinge that served to show
The nursery culture long ago,
As the graft is known by fruition ;

For the King's Physician, who nursed the case,
His verdict gave with an awful face,
And three others concurr'd to egg it ;
That the Patient to give old Death the slip,
Like the Pope, instead of a personal trip,
Must send her Leg as a Legate.

The limb was doom'd—it couldn't be saved !
And like other people the patient behaved,
Nay, bravely that cruel parting braved,
Which makes some persons so falter,
They rather would part, without a groan,
With the flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone,
They obtain'd at St. George's altar.

But when it came to fitting the stump
With a proxy limb—then flatly and plump
She spoke, in the spirit olden ;
She couldn't—she shouldn't—she wouldn't have wood
Nor a leg of cork, if she never stood,
And she swore an oath, or something as good,
The proxy limb should be golden !

A wooden leg ! what, a sort of peg,
For your common Jockeys and Jennies !
No, no, her mother might worry and plague—
Weep, go down on her knees, and beg,
But nothing would move Miss Kilmansegg !
She could—she would have a Golden Leg,
If it cost ten thousand guineas !

Wood indeed, in Forest or Park,
With its sylvan honours and feudal bark,
Is an aristocratic article :
But split and sawn, and hack'd about town,
Serving all needs of pauper or clown,
Trod on ! stagger'd on ! Wood cut down
Is vulgar—fibre and particle.

And Cork !—when the noble Cork Tree shades
A lovely group of Castilian maids,
'Tis a thing for a song or sonnet !—

But cork, as it stops the bottle of gin,
Or bungs the beer—the *small* beer—in,
It pierced her heart like a corking-pin,
To think of standing upon it !

A Leg of Gold—solid gold throughout,
Nothing else, whether slim or stout
Should ever support her, God willing !
She must—she could—she would have her whim,
Her father, she turn'd a deaf ear to him—
He might kill her—she didn't mind killing !
He was welcome to cut off her other limb—
He might cut her all off with a shilling !

All other promised gifts were in vain,
Golden Girdle, or Golden Chain,
She writhed with impatience more than pain,
And utter'd “pshaws !” and “pishes !”
But a Leg of Gold as she lay in bed,
It danced before her—it ran in her head !
It jump'd with her dearest wishes !

“Gold—gold—gold ! Oh, let it be gold !”
Asleep or awake that tale she told,
And when she grew delirious :
Till her parents resolved to grant her wish,
If they melted down plate, and goblet, and dish,
The case was getting so serious.

So a Leg was made in a comely mould,
Of Gold, fine virgin glittering gold,
As solid as man could make it—
Solid in foot, and calf, and shank,

A prodigious sum of money it sank ;
In fact 'twas a Branch of the family Bank,
And no easy matter to break it.

All sterling metal—not half-and-half,
The Goldsmith's mark was stamp'd on the calf—
'Twas pure as from Mexican barter !
And to make it more costly, just over the knee,
Where another ligature used to be,
Was a circle of jewels, worth shillings to see,
A new-fangled Badge of the Garter !

'Twas a splendid, brilliant, beautiful Leg,
Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,
'That Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg !
For, thanks to parental bounty,
Secure from Mortification's touch,
She stood on a Member that cost as much
As a Member for all the County !

HER FAME.

To gratify stern Ambition's whims,
What hundreds and thousands of precious limbs
On a field of battle we scatter !
Sever'd by sword, or bullet, or saw,
Off they go, all bleeding and raw,—
But the public seems to get the lock-jaw
So little is said on the matter !

Legs, the tightest that ever were seen,
The tightest, the lightest, that danced on the green,
Cutting capers to sweet Kitty Clover ;

Shatter'd, scatter'd, cut, and bowl'd down,
Off they go, worse off for renown,
A line in the *Times*, or a talk about town,
Than the leg that a fly runs over !

But the Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg,
That gowden, goolden, golden leg,
Was the theme of all conversation !
Had it been a Pillar of Church and State,
Or a prop to support the whole Dead Weight,
It could not have furnish'd more debate
To the heads and tails of the nation !

East and west, and north and south,
Though useless for either hunger or drouth,—
The Leg was in everybody's mouth,
To use a poetical figure,
Rumour, in taking her ravenous swim,
Saw, and seized on the tempting limb,
Like a shark on the leg of a nigger.

Wilful murder fell very dead ;
Debates in the House were hardly read ;
In vain the Police Reports were fed
With Irish riots and *rumpuses*—
The Leg ! the Leg ! was the great event,
Through every circle in life it went,
Like the leg of a pair of compasses.

The last new Novel seem'd tame and flat,
The Leg, a novelty newer than that,
Had tripp'd up the heels of Fiction !

It Burked the very essays of Burke,
And, alas ! how Wealth over Wit plays the Turk !
As a regular piece of goldsmith's work,
Got the better of Goldsmith's diction.

"A leg of gold ! what ! of solid gold !"
Cried rich and poor, and young and old,—
And Master and Miss and Madam—
'Twas the talk of 'Change—the Alley—the Bank—
And with men of scientific rank
It made as much stir as the fossil shank,
• Of a Lizard coeval with Adam !

Of course with Greenwich and Chelsea elves,
Men who had lost a limb themselves,
Its interest did not dwindle—
But Bill, and Ben, and Jack, and Tom
Could hardly have spun more yarns therefrom
If the leg had been a spindle.

Meanwhile the story went to and fro,
Till, gathering like the ball of snow,
By the time it got to Stratford-le-Bow,
Through Exaggeration's touches,
The Heiress and Hope of the Kilmanseggs
Was propp'd on *two* fine Golden Legs,
And a pair of Golden Crutches !

Never had Leg so great a run !
'Twas the "go" and the "Kick" thrown into one !
The mode—the new thing under the sun,
The rage—the fancy—the passion !
Bonnets were named, and hats were worn,

A la Golden Leg instead of Leghorn,
And stockings and shoes,
Of golden hues,
Took the lead in the walks of fashion !

The Golden Leg had a vast career,
It was sung and danced—and to show how near
Low folly to lofty approaches,
Down to society's very dregs,
The Belles of Wapping wore " Kilmanseggs,"
And St. Giles's Beaux sported Golden Legs
In their pinchbeck pins and brooches ! •

HER FIRST STEP.

Supposing the Trunk and Limbs of Man
Shared, on the allegorical plan,
By the Passions that mark Humanity,
Whichever might claim the head, or heart,
The stomach, or any other part,
The Legs would be seized by Vanity.

There's Bardus, a six-foot column of fop,
A lighthouse without any light atop,
Whose height would attract beholders
If he had not lost some inches clear
By looking down at his kerseymere,
Ogling the limbs he holds so dear,
Till he got a stoop in his shoulders.

Talk of Art, or Science, or Books,
And down go the everlasting looks,
To his crural beauties so wedded !

Try him, whenever you will, you find
His mind in his legs, and his legs in his mind,
All prongs and folly—in short, a kind
Of fork—that is fiddle-headed.

What wonder, then, if Miss Kilmansegg,
With a splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
Fit for the court of Scander-Beg,
Disdain'd to hide it like Joan or Meg,
In petticoats stuff'd or quilted?
Not she! 'twas her convalescent whim
To dazzle the world with her precious limb,—
Nay, to go a little high-kilted.

So cards were sent for that sort of mob
Where Tartars and Africans hob-and nob.
And the Cherokee talks of his cab and cob
To Polish or Lapland lovers—
Cards like that hieroglyphical call
To a geographical Fancy Ball
On the recent Post-Office covers.

For if Lion-hunters—and great ones too—
Would mob a savage from Latakoo,
Or squeeze for a glimpse of Prince Lee Boo,
That unfortunate Sandwich scion—
Hundreds of first-rate people, no doubt,
Would gladly, madly, rush to a rout,
That promised a Golden Lion!

HER FANCY BALL.

Of all the spirits of evil fame,
That hurt the soul or injure the frame,
And poison what's honest and hearty,

There's none more needs a Matthew to preach
A cooling antiphlogistic speech,
 To praise and enforce
 A temperate course,
Than the Evil Spirit of Party.

Go to the House of Commons, or Lords,
And they seem to be busy with simple words
 In their popular sense or pedantic—
But, alas ! with their cheers, and sneers, and jeers,
They're really busy, whatever appears,
Putting peas in each other's ears,
 To drive their enemies frantic !

Thus Tories like to worry the Whigs,
Who treat them in turn like Schwalbach pigs,
Giving them lashes, thrashes, and digs,
 With their writhing and pain delighted—
But after all that's said, and more,
The malice and spite of Party are poor
To the malice and spite of a party next door,
 To a party not invited.

On with the cap and out with the light,
Weariness bids the world good-night,
 At least for the usual season ;
But hark ! a clatter of horses' heels !
And Sleep and Silence are broken on wheels,
 Like Wilful Murder and Treason !

Another crash—and the carriage goes—
Again poor Weariness seeks the repose,
 That Nature demands, imperious ;

But Echo takes up the burden now,
With a rattling chorus of row-de-dow-dow,
Till Silence herself seems making a row,
Like a Quaker gone delirious !

'Tis night—a winter night—and the stars
Are shining like winkin'—Venus and Mars
Are rolling along in their golden cars
Through the sky's serene expansion—
But vainly the stars dispense their rays,
Venus and Mars are lost in the blaze
Of the Kilmansegg's luminous mansion !

Up jumps Fear in a terrible fright !
His bedchamber windows look so bright,—
With light all the Square is glutted !
Up he jumps, like a sole from the pan,
And a tremor sickens his inward man,
For he feels as only a gentleman can,
Who thinks he's being "gutted."

Again Fear settles, all snug and warm,
But only to dream of a dreadful storm
From Autumn's sulphurous locker ;
But the only electrical body that falls,
Wears a negative coat, and positive smalls,
And draws the peal that so appals
From the Kilmansegg's brazen knocker !

'Tis Curiosity's Benefit night—
And perchance 'tis the English-Second-Sight,
But whatever it be, so be it—

As the friends and guests of Miss Kilmansegg
Crowd in to look at her Golden Leg,
 As many more
 Mob round the door,
To see them going to see it !

In they go—in jackets and cloaks,
Plumes, and bonnets, turbans, and toques,
 As if to a Congress of Nations :
Greeks and Malays, with daggers and dirks,
Spaniards, Jews, Chinese, and Turks—
Some like original foreign works,
 But mostly like bad translations.

In they go, and to work like a pack,
Juan, Moses, and Shacabac—
Tom, and Jerry, and Springheel'd Jack,—
 For some of low Fancy are lovers—
Skirting, zigzagging, casting about,
Here and there, and in and out,
With a crush, and a rush, for a full-bodied
 rout
In one of the stiffest of covers.

In they went, and hunted about,
Open-mouth'd like chub and trout,
And some with the upper lip thrust out,
 Like that fish for routing, a barbel—
While Sir Jacob stood to welcome the crowd,
And rubb'd his hands, and smiled aloud,
And bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd,
 Like a man who is sawing marble.

For Princes were there, and Noble Peers ;
Dukes descended from Norman spears ;
Earls that dated from early years ;

And Lords in vast variety—
Besides the Gentry both new and old—
For people who stand on legs of gold,
Are sure to stand well with society.

“ But where—where—where?” with one accord
Cried Moses and Mufti, Jack and my Lord,

Wang-Fong and Il Bondocani—
When slow, and heavy, and dead as a dump,
They heard a foot begin to stump,

Thump ! lump !

Lump ! thump !

Like the Spectre in “ Don Giovanni ! ”

And lo ! the Heiress, Miss Kilmansegg,
With her splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
In the garb of a Goddess olden—
Like chaste Diana going to hunt,
With a golden spear—which of course was blunt,
And a tunic loop'd up to a gem in front,
To show the Leg that was golden !

Gold ! still gold ; her Crescent behold,
That should be silver, but would be gold ;
And her robe's auriferous spangles !
Her golden stomacher—how she would melt !
Her golden quiver, and golden belt,
Where a golden bugle dangles !

And her jewell'd Garter ! Oh, Sin, oh, Shame !
Let Pride and Vanity bear the blame,
That bring such blots on female fame !

But to be a true recorder,
Besides its thin transparent stuff,
The tunic was loop'd quite high enough
To give a glimpse of the Order !

But what have sin or shame to do
With a Golden Leg—and a stout one too ?

Away with all Prudery's panics !
That the precious metal, by thick and thin,
Will cover square acres of land or sin,
Is a fact made plain
Again and again,
In Morals as well as Mechanics.

A few, indeed, of her proper sex,
Who seem'd to feel her foot on their necks,
And fear'd their charms would meet with checks
From so rare and splendid a blazon—
A few cried " Fie ! "—and " Forward ! "—and
" Bold ! "

And said of the Leg it might be gold,
But to them it look'd like brazen !

'Twas hard they hinted for flesh and blood,
Virtue and Beauty, and all that's good,
To strike to mere dross their topgallants—
But what were Beauty, or Virtue, or Worth,
Gentle manners, or gentle birth,
Nay, what the most talented head on earth
To a Leg worth fifty Talents !

But the men sang quite another hymn
Of glory and praise to the precious Limb—
Age, sordid Age, admired the whim,

And its indecorum pardon'd—
While half of the young—ay, more than half—
Bow'd down and worshipp'd the Golden Calf,
Like the Jews when their hearts were harden'd.

A Golden Leg!—what fancies it fired!
What golden wishes and hopes inspired!
To give but a mere abridgment—
What a leg to leg-bail Embarrassment's serf!
What a leg for a Leg to take on the turf!
What a leg for a marching regiment!

A golden Leg!—whatever Love sings,
'Twas worth a bushel of "Plain Gold Rings"
With which the Romantic wheedles.
'Twas worth all the legs in stockings and socks—
'Twas a leg that might be put in the Stocks,
N.B.—Not the parish beadle's!

And Lady K. nid-nodded her head,
Lapp'd in a turban fancy-bred,
Just like a love-apple, huge and red,
Some Mussul-womanish mystery;
But whatever she meant
To represent,
She talk'd like the Muse of History.

She told how the filial leg was lost;
And then how much the gold one cost,
With its weight to a Trojan fraction:
And how it took off, and how it put on;
And call'd on Devil, Duke, and Don,
Mahomet, Moses, and Prester John,
To notice its beautiful action.

And then of the Leg she went in quest ;
And led it where the light was best ;
And made it lay itself up to rest

In postures for painters' studies :
It cost more tricks and trouble by half,
Than it takes to exhibit a six-legg'd Calf
To a boothful of country Cuddies.

Nor yet did the Heiress herself omit
The arts that help to make a hit,
And preserve a prominent station,
She talk'd and laugh'd far more than her share ;
And took a part in " Rich and Rare
Were the gems she wore "—and the gems were there
Like a Song with an Illustration.

She even stood up with a Count of France
To dance—alas !—the measures we dance

When Vanity plays the Piper !
Vanity, Vanity, apt to betray,
And lead all sorts of legs astray,
Wood, or metal, or human clay,—
Since Satan first play'd the Viper !

But first she doff'd her hunting gear,
And favour'd Tom Tug with her golden spear
To row with down the river—

A Bonze had her golden bow to hold ;
A Hermit her belt and bugle of gold ;
And an Abbot her golden quiver.

And then a space was clear'd on the floor,
And she walk'd the Minuet de la Cour
With all the pomp of a Pompadour,
But although she began *andante*,

Conceive the faces of all the Rout,
When she finished off with a whirligig bout,
And the Precious Leg stuck stiffly out
Like the leg of a *Figuranté*.

So the courtly dance was goldenly done,
And golden opinions, of course, it won
From all different sorts of people—
Chiming, ding-dong, with flattering phrase,
In one vociferous peal of praise,
Like the peal that rings on Royal days
From Loyalty's parish-steeple.

And yet, had the leg been one of those
That danced for bread in flesh-colour'd hose,
With Rosina's pastoral bevy,
The jeers it had met,—the shouts ! the scoff !
The cutting advice to "take itself off,"
For sounding but half so heavy.

Had it been a leg like those, perchance,
That teach little girls and boys to dance,
To set, poussette, recede, and advance,
With the steps and figures most proper,—
Had it hopp'd for a weekly or quarterly sum,
How little of praise or grist would have come
To a mill with such a hopper !

But the Leg was none of those limbs forlorn—
Bartering capers and hops for corn—
That meet with public hisses and scorn,
Or the morning journal denounces—
Had it pleased to caper from morn till dusk,
There was all the music of "Money Musk"
In its ponderous bangs and bounces.

But hark ;—as slow as the strokes of a pump,
Lump, thump !
Thump, lump !

As the Giant of Castle Otranto might stump,
To a lower room from an upper—
Down she goes with a noisy dint,
For taking the crimson turban's hint,
A noble Lord at the Head of the Mint
Is leading the Leg to supper !

But the supper, alas ! must rest untold,
With its blaze of light and its glitter of gold,
For to paint that scene of glamour,
It would need the Great Enchanter's charm,
Who waves over Palace, and Cot, and Farm,
An Arm like the Goldbeater's Golden Arm
That wields a Golden Hammer.

He—only He—could fitly state
The Massive Service of Golden Plate,
With the proper phrase and expansion—
The Rare Selection of Foreign Wines—
The Alps of Ice and Mountains of Pines,
The punch in Oceans and sugary shrines,
The Temple of Taste from Gunter's Designs—
In short, all that Wealth with A Feast combines
In a Splendid Family Mansion.

Suffice it each mask'd outlandish guest
Ate and drank of the very best,
According to critical conners—
And then they pledged the Hostess and Host.

But the Golden Leg was the standing toast,
And as somebody swore,
Walk'd off with more
Than its share of the "Hips!" and honours;

"Miss Kilmansegg!—
Full glasses I beg!—
Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg!"
And away went the bottle careering!
Wine in bumpers! and shouts in peals!
Till the Clown didn't know his head from his heels,
The Mussulman's eyes danced two-some reels,
And the Quaker was hoarse with cheering!

HER DREAM.

Miss Kilmansegg took off her leg,
And laid it down like a cribbage-peg,
For the Rout was done and the riot:
The Square was hush'd; not a sound was heard;
The sky was grey, and no creature stirr'd,
Except one little precocious bird,
That chirp'd—and then was quiet.

So still without,—so still within;—
It had been a sin
To drop a pin—
So intense is silence after a din,
It seem'd like Death's rehearsal!
To stir the air no eddy came:
And the taper burnt with as still a flame,
As to flicker had been a burning shame,
In a calm so universal.

The time for sleep had come at last ;
And there was the bed, so soft, so vast,
 Quite a field of Bedfordshire clover ;
Softer, cooler, and calmer, no doubt,
From the piece of work just ravell'd out,
For one of the pleasures of having a rout
 Is the pleasure of having it over.

No sordid pallet, or truckle mean,
Of straw, and rug, and tatters unclean :
But a splendid, gilded, carved machine,
 That was fit for a Royal Chamber.
On the top was a gorgeous golden wreath ;
And the damask curtains hung beneath,
 Like clouds of crimson and amber ;

Curtains, held up by two little plump things,
With golden bodies and golden wings,—
 Mere fins for such solidities—
 Two Cupids, in short,
 Of the regular sort,
But the housemaid call'd them “ Cupidities.”

No patchwork quilt, all seams and scars,
But velvet, powder'd with golden stars,
 A fit mantle for *Night-Commanders* !
And the pillow, as white as snow undimm'd
And as cool as the pool that the breeze has skimm'd,
Was cased in the finest cambric, and trimm'd
 With the costliest lace of Flanders.

And the bed—of the Eider's softest down,
’Twas a place to revel, to smother, to drown
 In a bliss inferr'd by the Poet ;

For if Ignorance be indeed a bliss,
What blessed ignorance equals this,
To sleep—and not to know it?

Oh, bed ! oh, bed ! delicious bed !
That heaven upon earth to the weary head ;
But a place that to name would be ill-bred,
To the head with a wakeful trouble—
'Tis held by such a different lease !
To one, a place of comfort and peace,
All stuff'd with the down of stubble geese,
To another with only the stubble !

To one a perfect Halcyon nest,
All calm, and balm, and quiet, and rest,
And soft as the fur of the cony—
To another, so restless for body and head,
That the bed seems borrow'd from Nettlebed
And the pillow from Stratford the Stony !

To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,
To the Land of Nod, or where you please :
But alas ! for the watchers and weepers,
Who turn, and turn, and turn again,
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,
With an anxious brain,
And thoughts in a train,
That does not run upon *sleepers* !

Wide awake as the mousing owl,
Night-hawk, or other nocturnal fowl,—
But more profitless vigils keeping,—
Wide awake in the dark they stare,
Filling with phantoms the vacant air,

As if that Crook-back'd Tyrant Care
Had plotted to kill them sleeping.

And oh ! when the blessed diurnal light
Is quench'd by the providential night,
To render our slumber more certain !
Pity, pity the wretches that weep,
For they must be wretched, who cannot sleep
When God himself draws the curtain !

The careful Betty the pillow beats,
And airs the blankets, and smooths the sheets,
And gives the mattress a shaking—
But vainly Betty performs her part,
If a ruffled head and a rumpled heart,
As well as the couch, want making.

There's Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and nerves,
Where other people would make preserves,
He turns his fruits into pickles ;
Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,
At night, to his own sharp fancies a prey,
He lies like a hedgehog roll'd up the wrong way,
Tormenting himself with his prickles.

But a child—that bids the world good night.
In downright earnest and cuts it quite—
A Cherub no Art can copy,—
'Tis a perfect picture to see him lie
As if he had supp'd on a dormouse pie,
(An ancient classical dish, by the bye)
With a sauce of syrup of poppy.

Oh, bed ! bed ! bed ! delicious bed !
That heaven upon earth to the weary head,

Whether lofty or low its condition !
But instead of putting our plagues on shelves,
In our blankets how often we toss ourselves,
Or are toss'd by such allegorical elves
As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition !

The independent Miss Kilmansegg
Took off her independent Leg
And laid it beneath her pillow,
And then on the bed her frame she cast,
The time for repose had come at last,
But long, long, after the storm is past
Rolls the turbid, turbulent billow.

No part she had in vulgar cares
That belong to common household affairs—
Nocturnal annoyances such as theirs,
Who lie with a shrewd surmising,
That while they are couchant (a bitter cup !)
Their bread and butter are getting up,
And the coals, confound them, are rising.

No fear she had her sleep to postpone,
Like the crippled Widow who weeps alone
And cannot make a doze her own,
For the dread that mayhap on the morrow,
The true and Christian reading to baulk,
A broker will take up her bed and walk
By way of curing her sorrow.

No cause like these she had to bewail,
But the breath of applause had blown a gale,
And winds from that quarter seldom fail
To cause some human commotion ;

But whenever such breezes coincide
 With the very spring-tide
 Of human pride,
There's no such swell on the ocean !

Peace, and ease, and slumber lost,
She turn'd, and roll'd, and tumbled and toss'd
 With a tumult that would not settle :
A common case, indeed, with such
As have too little, or think too much,
 Of the precious and glittering metal.

Gold !—she saw at her golden foot
The Peer whose tree had an olden root,
The Proud, the Great, the Learned to boot,
 The handsome, the gay, and the witty—
The Man of Science—of Arms—of Art,
The man who deals but at Pleasure's mart,
 And the man who deals in the City.

Gold, still gold—and true to the mould !
In the very scheme of her dream it told ;
 For, by magical transmutation,
From her Leg through her body it seem'd to go
Till, gold above, and gold below,
She was gold, all gold, from her little gold toe
 To her organ of Veneration !

And still she retain'd through Fancy's art,
The Golden Bow, and Golden Dart,
With which she had play'd a Goddess's part
 In her recent glorification :
And still, like one of the self-same brood,
On a Plinth of the self-same metal she stood
 For the whole world's adoration.

And hymns and incense around her roll'd,
From Golden Harps and Censers of Gold,—
For Fancy in dreams is as uncontroll'd

As a horse without a bridle :

What wonder, then, from all checks exempt,
If, inspired by the Golden Leg, she dreamt
She was turn'd to a Golden Idol?

HER COURTSHIP.

When leaving Eden's happy land,
The grieving Angel led by the hand
Our banish'd Father and Mother,
Forgotten amid their awful doom,
The tears, the fears, and the future's gloom,
On each brow was a wreath of Paradise bloom,
That our Parents had twined for each other.

It was only while sitting like figures of stone,
For the grieving angel had skyward flown,
As they sat, those Two in the world alone,
With disconsolate hearts nigh cloven.
That scenting the gust of happier hours,
They look'd around for the precious flow'rs,
And lo!—a last relic of Eden's dear bow'rs—
The chaplet that Love had woven !

And still, when a pair of Lovers meet,
There's a sweetness in air, unearthly sweet,
That savours still of that happy retreat
Where Eve by Adam was courted :
Whilst the joyous Thrush, and the gentle Dove,
Woo'd their mates in the boughs above,
And the Serpent, as yet, only sported.

Who hath not felt that breath in the air,
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,
A warmth in the light, and a bliss everywhere,
When young hearts yearn together?
All sweets below, and all sunny above,
Oh ! there's nothing in life like making love,
Save making hay in fine weather !

Who hath not found amongst his flow'rs
A blossom too bright for this world of ours,
Like a rose among snows of Sweden?
But to turn again to Miss Kilmansegg,
Where must Love have gone to beg,
If such a thing as a Golden Leg
Had put its foot in Eden !

And yet—to tell the rigid truth—
Her favour was sought by Age and Youth—
For the prey will find a prowler !
She was follow'd, flatter'd, courted, address'd,
Woo'd, and coo'd, and wheedled, and press'd,
By suitors from North, South, East, and West,
Like that Heiress in song, Tibbie Fowler !

But, alas ! alas ! for the Woman's fate,
Who has from a mob to choose a mate !
'Tis a strange and painful mystery !
But the more the eggs, the worse the hatch ;
The more the fish, the worse the catch ;
The more the sparks, the worse the match ;
Is a fact in Woman's history.

Give her between a brace to pick,
And mayhap, with luck to help the trick,
She will take the Faustus, and leave the Old Nick—

But her future bliss to baffle,
Amongst a score let her have a voice,
And she'll have as little cause to rejoice,
As if she had won the "Man of her choice,"
In a matrimonial raffle !

Thus, even thus, with the Heiress and Hope,
Fulfilling the adage of too much rope,
With so ample a competition,
She chose the least worthy of all the group,
Just as the vulture makes a stoop,
And singles out from the herd or troop
The beast of the worst condition.

A Foreign Count—who came incog.,
Not under a cloud, but under a fog,
In a Calais packet's fore-cabin,
To charm some lady British-born,
With his eyes as black as the fruit of the thorn,
And his hooky nose, and his beard half-shorn,
Like a half-converted Rabbin.

And because the Sex confess a charm
In the man who has slash'd a head or arm,
Or has been a throat's undoing,
He was dress'd like one of the glorious trade,
At least when Glory is off parade,
With a stock, and a frock, well trimm'd with
braid,
And frogs—that went a-wooing.

Moreover, as Counts are apt to do,
On the left-hand side of his dark surtout,
At one of those holes that buttons go through,
(To be a precise recorder,)

A ribbon he wore, or rather a scrap,
About an inch of ribbon mayhap,
That one of his rivals, whimsical chap,
Described as his "Retail Order."

And then—and much it help'd his chance—
He could sing, and play first-fiddle, and dance,
Perform charades, and Proverbs of France—
Act the tender, and do the cruel ;
For amongst his other killing parts,
He had broken a brace of female hearts
And murder'd three men in duel ! .

Savage at heart, and false of tongue,
Subtle with age, and smooth to the young,
Like a snake in his coiling and curling—
Such was the Count—to give him a niche—
Who came to court that Heiress rich,
And knelt at her foot—one needn't say which—
Besieging her castle of *Sterling*.

With pray'rs and vows he open'd his trench,
And plied her with English, Spanish, and French,
In phrases the most sentimental :
And quoted poems in High and Low Dutch,
With now and then an Italian touch,
Till she yielded, without resisting much,
To homage so continental.

And then—the sordid bargain to close—
With a miniature sketch of his hooky nose,
And his dear dark eyes, as black as sloes,
And his beard and whiskers as black as those,
The lady's consent he requited—

And instead of the lock that lovers beg,
The Count received from Miss Kilmansegg
A model, in small, of her Precious Leg—
And so the couple were plighted !

But, oh ! the love that gold must crown !
Better—better, the love of the clown,
Who admires his lass in her Sunday gown,
As if all the fairies had dress'd her !
Whose brain to no crooked thought gives birth,
Except that he never will part on earth
With his true love's crooked tester !

Alas ! for the love that's linked with gold !
Better—better a thousand times told—
More honest, happy, and laudable,
The downright loving of pretty Cis,
Who wipes her lips, though there's nothing amiss,
And takes a kiss, and gives a kiss,
In which her heart is audible !

Pretty Cis, so smiling and bright,
Who loves—as she labours—with all her might,
And without any sordid leaven !
Who blushes as red as haws and hips,
Down to her very finger-tips,
For Roger's blue ribbons—to her, like strips
Cut out of the azure of Heaven !

HER MARRIAGE.

'Twas morn—a most auspicious one !
From the Golden East, the Golden Sun
Came forth his glorious race to run,
Through clouds of most splendid tinges :

Clouds that lately slept in shade,
But now seem'd made
Of gold brocade,
With magnificent golden fringes.

Gold above, and gold below,
The earth reflected the golden glow,
From river, and hill, and valley ;
Gilt by the golden light of morn,
The Thames—it look'd like the Golden Horn,
And the Barge, that carried coal or corn,
Like Cleopatra's Galley !

Bright as clusters of Golden-rod,
Suburban poplars began to nod,
With extempore splendour furnish'd ;
While London was bright with glittering clocks,
Golden dragons, and Golden cocks,
And above them all,
The dome of St. Paul,
With its Golden Cross and its Golden Ball,
Shone out as if newly burnish'd !

And lo ! for Golden Hours and Joys,
Troops of glittering Golden Boys
Danced along with a jocund noise,
And their gilded emblems carried !
In short, 'twas the year's most Golden Day,
By mortals call'd the First of May,
When Miss Kilmansegg,
Of the Golden Leg,
With a Golden Ring was married !

And thousands of children, women, and men,
Counted the clock from eight till ten.

From St. James's sonorous steeple ;
For next to that interesting job,
The hanging of Jack, or Bill, or Bob,
There's nothing so draws a London mob
As the noosing of very rich people.

And a treat it was for the mob to behold
The Bridal Carriage that blazed with gold !
And the Footman tall and the Coachman bold,
In liveries so resplendent—
Coats you wonder'd to see in place,
They seem'd so rich with golden lace,
That they might have been independent.

Coats, that made those menials proud
Gaze with scorn on the dingy crowd,
From their gilded elevations :
Not to forget that saucy lad
(Ostentation's favourite cad),
The Page, who look'd so splendidly clad,
Like a Page of the "Wealth of Nations."

But the Coachman carried off the state,
With what was a Lancashire body of late
Turn'd into a Dresden Figure ;
With a bridal Nosegay of early bloom,
About the size of a birchen broom,
And so huge a White Favour, had Gog been Groom,
He need not have worn a bigger.

And then to see the Groom ! the Count !
With Foreign Orders to such an amount,
And whiskers so wild—nay, bestial ;

He seem'd to have borrow'd the shaggy hair
As well as the Stars of the Polar Bear,
To make him look celestial !

And then—Great Jove !—the struggle, the crush,
The screams, the heaving, the awful rush,
The swearing, the tearing, and fighting,—
The hats and bonnets smash'd like an egg—
To catch a glimpse of the Golden Leg,
Which between the steps and Miss Kilmansegg
Was fully display'd in alighting !

From the Golden Ankle up to the Knee
There it was for the mob to see !
A shocking act had it chanced to be
A crooked leg or a skinny :
But although a magnificent veil she wore,
Such as never was seen before,
In case of blushes, she blush'd no more
Than George the First on a guinea !

Another step, and lo ! she was launched !
All in white, as Brides are *blanched*
With a wreath of most wonderful splendour—
Diamonds, and pearls, so rich in device,
That, according to calculation nice,
Her head was worth as royal a price,
As the head of the Young Pretender.

Bravely she shone—and shone the more
As she sail'd through the crowd of squalid and poor,
Thief, beggar, and tatterdemalion—
Led by the Count, with his sloe-black eyes
Bright with triumph, and some surprise,

Like Anson on making sure of his prize
The famous Mexican Galleon !

Anon came Lady K., with her face
Quite made up to act with grace,
But she cut the performance shorter ;
For instead of pacing stately and stiff,
At the stare of the vulgar she took a miff,
And ran, full speed, into Church, as if
To get married before her daughter.

But Sir Jacob walk'd more slowly, and bow'd
Right and left to the gaping crowd,
Wherever a glance was seizable :
For Sir Jacob thought he bow'd like a Guelph,
And therefore bow'd to imp and elf,
And would gladly have made a bow to himself,
Had such a bow been feasible.

And last—and not the least of the sight,
Six “ Handsome Fortunes,” all in white,
Came to help in the marriage rite,—
And rehearse their own hymeneals ;
And then the bright procession to close,
They were followed by just as many Beaux
Quite fine enough for Ideals.

Glittering men, and splendid dames,
Thus they enter'd the porch of St. James',
Pursued by a thunder of laughter ;
For the Beadle was forced to intervene,
For Jim the Crow, and his Mayday Queen,
With her gilded ladle, and Jack i' the Green,
Would fain have follow'd after !

Beadle-like he hush'd the shout ;
But the temple was full " inside and out,"
And a buzz kept buzzing all round about
Like bees when the day is sunny—
A buzz universal, that interfered
With the right that ought to have been revered,
As if the couple already were smeared
With Wedlock's treacle and honey !

Yet Wedlock's a very awful thing :
'Tis something like that feat in the ring,
Which requires good nerve to do it—
When one of a " Grand Equestrian Troupe"
Makes a jump at a gilded hoop,
Not certain at all
Of what may befall
After his getting through it !

But the Count he felt the nervous work
No more than any polygamous Turk,
Or bold piratical skipper,
Who, during his buccaneering search,
Would as soon engage a hand in Church,
As a hand on board his clipper !

And how did the Bride perform her part ?
Like any bride who is cold at heart,
Mere snow with the ice's glitter ;
What but a life of winter for her !
Bright but chilly, alive without stir,
So splendidly comfortless,—just like a Fir
When the frost is severe and bitter.

Such were the future man and wife !
Whose bale or bliss to the end of life

A few short words were to settle—

“Wilt thou have this woman?”

“I will”—and then,

“Wilt thou have this man?”

“I will,” and “Amen”—

And those Two were one Flesh, in the Angels' ken,
Except one Leg—that was metal.

Then the names were sign'd—and kiss'd the kiss ;
And the Bride, who came from her coach a Miss,

As a Countess walk'd to her carriage—

Whilst Hymen preen'd his plumes like a dove,

And Cupid flutter'd his wings above,

In the shape of a fly—as little a Love

As ever look'd in at a marriage !

Another crash—and away they dash'd,

And the gilded carriage and footman flash'd

From the eyes of the gaping people—

Who turn'd to gaze at the toe-and-heel!

Of the Golden Boys beginning a reel,

To the merry sound of a wedding-peal

From St. James's musical steeple.

Those wedding-bells ! those wedding-bells !

How sweetly they sound in pastoral dells

From a tower in an ivy-green jacket !

But town-made joys how dearly they cost ;

And after all are tumbled and tost,

Like a peal from a London steeple, and lost

In town-made riot and racket.

The wedding-peal, how sweetly it peals

With grass or heather beneath our heels,—

For bells are Music's laughter !—

But a London peal, well mingled, be sure,
With vulgar noises and voices impure, —
What a harsh and discordant overture
To the Harmony meant to come after!

But hence with Discord—perchance too soon
To cloud the face of the honeymoon
With a dismal occultation!—
Whatever Fate's concerted trick,
The Countess and Count, at the present nick,
Have a chicken, and not a crow, to pick
At a sumptuous Cold Collation.

A Breakfast—no unsubstantial mess,
But one in the style of Good Queen Bess,
Who,—heartly as hippocampus,—
Broke her fast with ale and beef,
Instead of toast and the Chinese leaf,
And—in lieu of anchovy—grampus.

A breakfast of fowl, and fish, and flesh,
Whatever was sweet, or salt, or fresh ;
With wines the most rare and curious—
Wines of the richest flavour and hue ;
With fruits from the worlds both Old and New ;
And fruits obtain'd before they were due
At a discount most usurious.

For wealthy prelates there be, that scout
What is *in* season, for what is *out*.
And prefer all precocious savour :
For instance, early green peas, of the sort
That costs some four or five guineas a quart ;
Where the *Mint* is the principal flavour.

And many a wealthy man was there,
Such as the wealthy City could spare,
To put in a portly appearance—
Men, whom their fathers had help'd to gild :
And men who had had their fortunes to build,
And—much to their credit—had richly fill'd
Their purses by *pursy-verance*.

Men, by popular rumour at least,
Not the last to enjoy a feast !
And truly they were not idle !
Luckier far than the chestnut tits,
Which, down at the door, stood champing their bits
At a different sort of bridle.

For the time was come—and the whisker'd Count
Help'd his Bride in the carriage to mount,
And fain would the Muse deny it,
But the crowd, including two butchers in blue,
(The regular killing Whitechapel hue,)
Of her Precious Calf had as ample a view
As if they had come to buy it !

Then away ! away ! with all the speed
That golden spurs can give to the steed,—
Both Yellow Boys and Guineas, indeed,
Concurr'd to urge the cattle—
Away they went, with favours white,
Yellow jackets, and panels bright,
And left the mob, like a mob at night,
Agape at the sound of a rattle.

Away ! away ! they rattled and roll'd,
The Count, and his Bride, and her Leg of Gold—
That faded charm to the charmer ;

Away, through old Brentford rang the din,
Of wheels and heels, on their way to win
That hill, named after one of her kin,
The Hill of the Golden Farmer !

Gold, still gold—it flew like dust !
It tipp'd the post-boy and paid the trust ;
In each open palm it was freely thrust ;
There was nothing but giving and taking !
And if gold could ensure the future hour,
What hopes attended that Bride to her bow'r,
But alas ! even hearts with a four-horse pow'r
Of opulence end in breaking !

HER HONEYMOON.

The moon—the moon, so silver and cold,
Her fickle temper has oft been told,
Now shady—now bright and sunny—
But of all the lunar things that change,
The one that shows most fickle and strange,
And takes the most eccentric range
Is the moon—so call'd—of honey !

To some a full-grown orb reveal'd,
As big and as round as Norval's shield,
And as bright as a burner Bude-lighted ;
To others as dull, and dingy, and damp,
As any oleaginous lamp,
Of the regular old parochial stamp,
In a London fog benighted.

To the loving, a bright and constant sphere,
That makes earth's commonest things appear
All poetic, romantic, and tender :

Hanging with jewels a cabbage-stump,
And investing a common post, or a pump,
A currant-bush or a gooseberry-clump,
With a halo of dreamlike splendour.

A sphere such as shone from Italian skies,
In Juliet's dear, dark liquid eyes,
Tipping trees with its argent braveries—
And to couples not favour'd with Fortune's boons
One of the most delightful of moons,
For it brightens their pewter platters and spoons
Like a silver service of Savory's !

For all is bright, and beauteous, and clear,
And the meanest thing most precious and dear
When the magic of Love is present :
Love, that lends a sweetness and grace,
To the humblest spot and the plainest face—
That turns Wilderness Row into Paradise Place,
And Garlick Hill to Mount Pleasant !

Love that sweetens sugarless tea,
And makes contentment and joy agree
With the coarsest boarding and bedding ;
Love, that no golden ties can attach,
But nestles under the humblest thatch,
And will fly away from an Emperor's match
To dance at a Penny Wedding !

Oh, happy, happy, thrice happy state,
When such a bright Planet governs the fate
Of a pair of united lovers !
'Tis theirs, in spite of the Serpent's hiss,
To enjoy the pure primeval kiss,

With as much of the old original bliss
As mortality ever recovers !

There's strength in double joints, no doubt,
In double X Ale, and Dublin Stout,
That the single sorts know nothing about—
And the fist is strongest when doubled—
And double aqua-fortis, of course,
And double soda-water, perforce,
Are the strongest that ever bubbled !

There's double beauty whenever a Swan
Swims on a Lake with her double thereon ;
And ask the gardener, Luke or John,
Of the beauty of double-blowing—
A double dahlia delights the eye ;
And it's far the loveliest sight in the sky,
When a double rainbow is glowing !

There's warmth in a pair of double soles ;
As well as a double allowance of coals—
In a coat that is double-breasted—
In double windows and double doors ;
And a double U wind is blest by scores
For its warmth to the tender-chested.

There's a twofold sweetness in double pipes ;
And a double barrel and double snipes
Give the sportsman a duplicate pleasure :
There's double safety in double locks ;
And double letters bring cash for the box :
And all the world knows that double knocks
Are gentility's double measure.

There's double sweetness in double rhymes,
And a double at Whist and a double Times

In profit are certainly double—

By doubling, the Hare contrives to escape ;
And all seamen delight in a doubled Cape
And a double-reef'd topsail in trouble.

There's a double chuck at a double chin,
And of course there's a double pleasure therein,

If the parties were brought to telling :

And however our Dennises take offence,
A double meaning shows double sense ;

And if proverbs tell truth,

A double tooth

Is Wisdom's adopted dwelling !

But double wisdom, and pleasure, and sense,
Beauty, respect, strength, comfort and thence

Through whatever the list discovers,

They are all in the double blessedness summ'd,
Of what was formerly double-drumm'd,

The Marriage of two true Lovers !

Now the Kilmansegg Moon, it must be told—

Though instead of silver it tipp'd with gold—

Shone rather wan, and distant, and cold,

And before its days were at thirty,

Such gloomy clouds began to collect,

With an ominous ring of ill effect,

As gave but too much cause to expect

Such weather as seamen call dirty !

And yet the moon was the " Young May Moon,"

And the scented hawthorn had blossom'd soon

And the thrush and the blackbird were singing—

The snow white lambs were skipping in play,
And the bee was humming a tune all day
To flowers, as welcome as flowers in May,
And the trout in the stream was springing !

But what were the hues of the blooming earth,
Its scents—its sounds—or the music and mirth
Of its furr'd or its feather'd creatures,
To a Pair in the world's last sordid stage,
Who had never look'd into Nature's page,
And had strange ideas of a Golden Age,
Without any Arcadian features ?

And what were joys of the pastoral kind
To a Bride—town-made—with a heart and a mind
With simplicity ever at battle ?
A bride of an ostentatious race,
Who, thrown in the Golden Farmer's place,
Would have trimm'd her shepherds with golden lace,
And gilt the horns of her cattle.

She could not please the pigs with her whim,
And the sheep wouldn't cast their eyes at a limb
For which she had been such a martyr :
The deer in the park, and the colts at grass,
And the cows unheeded let it pass ;
And the ass on the common was such an ass,
That he wouldn't have swapp'd
The thistle he cropp'd
For her Leg, including the Garter !

She hated lanes and she hated fields—
She hated all that the country yields—
And barely knew turnips from clover ;

She hated walking in any shape,
And a country stile was an awkward scrape,
Without the bribe of a mob to gape
At the Leg in clambering over !

O blessed Nature, "O rus ! O rus !"
Who cannot sigh for the country thus,
Absorb'd in a worldly torpor—
Who does not yearn for its meadow-sweet breath,
Untainted by care, and crime, and death,
And to stand sometimes upon grass or heath—
That soul, spite of gold, is a pauper !

But to hail the pearly advent of morn,
And relish the odour fresh from the thorn,
She was far too pamper'd a madam,
Or to joy in the daylight waxing strong,
While, after ages of sorrow and wrong,
The scorn of the proud, the misrule of the strong,
And all the woes that to man belong,
The Lark still carols the self-same song
That he did to the uncurs'd Adam !

The Lark ! she had given all Leipsic's flocks
For a Vauxhall tune in a musical box ;
And as for the birds in the thicket,
Thrush or ousel in leafy niche,
The linnet or finch, she was far too rich
To care for a Morning Concert, to which
She was welcome without any ticket.

Gold, still gold, her standard of old,
All pastoral joys were tried by gold,
Or by fancies golden and crural—

Till ere she had pass'd one week unblest,
As her agricultural Uncle's guest,
Her mind was made up, and fully imprest,
That felicity could not be rural !

And the Count?—to the snow-white lambs at play,
And all the scents and the sights of May,
And the birds that warbled their passion,
His ears and dark eyes, and decided nose,
Were as deaf and as blind and as dull as those
That overlooked the Bouquet de Rose,
The Huille Antique,
And Parfums Unique,
In a Barber's Temple of Fashion.

To tell, indeed, the true extent
Of his rural bias so far it went
As to covet estates in ring fences—
And for rural lore he had learn'd in town
That the country was green, turn'd up with brown,
And garnish'd with trees that a man might cut down,
Instead of his own expenses.

And yet had that fault been his only one,
The Pair might have had few quarrels or none,
For their tastes thus far were in common ;
But faults he had that a haughty bride
With a Golden Leg could hardly abide—
Faults that would even have roused the pride
Of a far less metalsome woman !

It was early days indeed for a wife,
In the very spring of her married life,
To be chill'd by its wintry weather—

But instead of sitting as Love-Birds do,
On Hymen's turtles that bill and coo—
Enjoying their "moon and honey for two"
They were scarcely seen together !

In vain she sat with her Precious Leg
A little exposed, *à la* Kilmansegg,
And roll'd her eyes in their sockets !
He left her in spite of her tender regards,
And those loving murmurs described by bards,
For the rattling of dice and the shuffling of cards,
And the poking of balls into pockets !

Moreover he loved the deepest stake
And the heaviest bets the players would make ;
And he drank—the reverse of sparely,—
And he used strange curses that made her fret ;
And when he play'd with herself at piquet,
She found, to her cost,
For she always lost,
That the Count did not count quite fairly.

And then came dark mistrust and doubt,
Gather'd by worming his secrets out,
And slips in his conversations—
Fears, which all her peace destroy'd,
That his title was null—his coffers were void—
And his French Château was in Spain, or enjoy'd
The most airy of situations.

But still his heart—if he had such a part—
She—only she—might possess his heart,
And hold his affections in fetters—

Alas ! that hope, like a crazy ship,
Was forced its anchor and cable to slip
When, seduced by her fears, she took a dip
In his private papers and letters.

Letters that told of dangerous leagues ;
And notes that hinted as many intrigues
As the Count's in the " Barber of Seville "—
In short such mysteries came to light,
That the Countess-Bride, on the thirtieth night,
Woke and started up in affright,
And kick'd and scream'd with all her might,
And finally fainted away outright,
For she dreamt she had married the Devil !

HER MISERY.

Who hath not met with home-made bread,
A heavy compound of putty and lead—
And home-made wines that rack the head,
And home-made liqueurs and waters ?
Home-made pop that will not foam,
And home-made dishes that drive one from home,
Not to name each mess,
For the face or dress,
Home-made by the homely daughters ?

Home-made physic that sickens the sick ;
Thick for thin and thin for thick ;
In short each homogeneous trick
For poisoning domesticity ?

And since our Parents, call'd the First,
A little family squabble nurst,
Of all our evils the worst of the worst
Is home-made infelicity.

There's a Golden Bird that claps its wings,
And dances for joy on its perch, and sings
With a Persian exultation :
For the Sun^{*} is shining into the room,
And brightens up the carpet-bloom,
As if it were new, bran new, from the loom,
Or the lone Nun's fabrication.

And thence the glorious radiance flames
On pictures in massy gilded frames—
Enshrining, however, no painted Dames,
But portraits of colts and fillies—
Pictures hanging on walls, which shine,
In spite of the bard's familiar line,
With clusters of " Gilded lilies."

And still the flooding sunlight shares
Its lustre with gilded sofas and chairs,
That shine as if freshly burnish'd—
And gilded tables, with glittering stocks
Of gilded china, and golden clocks,
Toy, and trinket, and musical box,
That Peace and Paris have furnish'd.

And lo ! with the brightest gleam of all
The glowing sunbeam is seen to fall
On an object as rare as splendid—
The golden foot of the Golden Leg
Of the Countess—once Miss Kilmansegg—
But there all sunshine is ended.

Her cheek is pale, and her eye is dim,
And downward cast, yet not at the limb,
Once the centre of all speculation ;
But downward drooping in comfort's dearth,
As gloomy thoughts are drawn to the earth—
Whence human sorrows derive their birth—
By a moral gravitation.

Her golden hair is out of its braids,
And her sighs betray the gloomy shades
That her evil planet revolves in—
And tears are falling that catch a gleam
So bright as they drop in the sunny beam,
That tears of *aqua regia* they seem,
The water that gold dissolves in.

Yet, not filial grief were shed
Those tears for a mother's insanity ;
Nor yet because her father was dead,
For the bowing Sir Jacob had bow'd his head
To Death—with his usual urbanity ;
The waters that down her visage rill'd
Were drops of unrectified spirit distill'd
From the limbeck of Pride and Vanity.

Tears that fell alone and unchecked,
Without relief, and without respect,
Like the fabled pearls that the pigs neglect,
When pigs have that opportunity—
And of all the griefs that mortals share,
The one that seems the hardest to bear
Is the grief without community.

How bless'd the heart that has a friend
A sympathising ear to lend
To troubles too great to smother !
For as ale and porter, when flat, are restored
Till a sparkling bubbling head they afford,
So sorrow is cheer'd by being pour'd
From one vessel into another.

But friend or gossip she had not one
To hear the vile deeds that the Count had done,
How night after night he rambled ;
And how she had learnt by sad degrees
That he drank, and smoked, and worse than
these,
That he " swindled, intrigued, and gambled."

How he kiss'd the maids, and sparr'd with John !
And came to bed with his garments on ;
With other offences as heinous—
And brought *strange* gentlemen home to dine,
That he said were in the Fancy Line,
And they fancied spirits instead of wine,
And call'd her lap-dog " Wenus."

Of " making a book " how he made a stir,
But never had written a line to her,
Once his idol and Cara Sposa :
And how he had storm'd and treated her ill,
Because she refused to go down to a mill,
She didn't know where, but remember'd still
That the miller's name was Mendoza.

How often he waked her up at night,
And oftener still by the morning light,
 Reeling home from his haunts unlawful,
Singing songs that shouldn't be sung,
Except by beggars and thieves unhung—
Or volleying oaths that a foreign tongue
 Made still more horrid and awful !

How oft, instead of otto of rose,
With vulgar smells he offended her nose,
 From gin, tobacco, and onion !
And then how wildly he used to stare !
And shake his fist at nothing, and swear,—
And pluck by the handful his shaggy hair,
Till he look'd like a study of Giant Despair
 For a new Edition of Bunyan !

For dice will run the contrary way,
As well is known to all who play,
 And cards will conspire as in treason :
And what with keeping a hunting-box,
 Following fox—
 Friends in flocks,
 Burgundies, Hocks,
 From London Docks ;
 Stultz's frocks,
 Manton and Nock's
 Barrels and locks,
 Shooting blue rocks,
 Trainers and jocks,
 Buskins and socks,
 Pugilistical knocks,
 And fighting-cocks,

If he found himself short in funds and stocks
These rhymes will furnish the reason !

His friends, indeed, were falling away—
Friends who insist on play or pay—
And he fear'd at no very distant day
To be cut by Lord and by cadger,
As one who has gone, or is going, to smash,
For his checks no longer drew the cash,
Because, as his comrades explain'd in flash,
“ He had overdrawn his badger.”

Gold, gold—alas ! for the gold
Spent where souls are bought and sold,
In Vice's Walpurgis revel !
Alas ! for muffles, and bulldogs, and guns,
The leg that walks, and the leg that runs,—
All real evils, though Fancy ones,
When they lead to debt, dishonour, and duns,
Nay, to death, and perchance the devil !

Alas ! for the last of a Golden race !
Had she cried her wrongs in the market-place,
She had warrant for all her clamour—
For the worst of rogues, and brutes, and rakes,
Was breaking her heart by constant aches,
With as little remorse as the Pauper, who breaks
A flint with a parish hammer !

HER LAST WILL.

Now the Precious Leg while cash was flush,
Or the Count's acceptance worth a rush,
Had never excited dissension ;

But no sooner the stocks began to fall,
Than, without any ossification at all,
The limb became what people call
A perfect bone of contention.

For alter'd days brought alter'd ways,
And instead of the complimentary phrase,
So current before her bridal—
The Countess heard, in language low,
That her Precious Leg was precious slow,
A good 'un to look at but bad to go,
And kept quite a sum lying idle.

That instead of playing musical airs,
Like Colin's foot in going upstairs—
As the wife in the Scottish ballad declares—
It made an infernal stumping.
Whereas a member of cork, or wood,
Would be lighter and cheaper and quite as good,
Without the unbearable thumping.

P'rhaps she thought it a decent thing
To show her calf to cobbler and king,
But nothing could be absurder—
While none but the crazy would advertise,
Their gold before their servants' eyes,
Who of course some night would make it a prize,
By a Shocking and Barbarous Murder.

But spite of hint, and threat, and scoff,
The Leg kept its situation ;
For legs are not to be taken off,
By a verbal amputation.

And mortals when they take a whim,
The greater the folly the stiffer the limb
That stand upon it or by it—
So the Countess, then Miss Kilmansegg,
At her marriage refused to stir a peg,
Till the Lawyers had fasten'd on her Leg
As fast as the Law could tie it.

Firmly then—and more firmly yet—
With scorn for scorn, and with threat for threat,
The Proud One confronted the Cruel :
And loud and bitter the quarrel rose
Fierce and merciless—one of those,
With spoken daggers, and looks like blows,
In all but the bloodshed a duel !

Rash, and wild, and wretched, and wrong,
Were the words that came from Weak and
Strong,
Till madden'd for desperate matters,
Fierce as tigress escaped from her den,
She flew to her desk—'twas open'd—and then,
In the time it takes to try a pen,
Or the clerk to utter his slow Amen,
Her Will was in fifty tatters !

But the Count, instead of curses wild,
Only nodded his head and smiled,
As if at the spleen of an angry child ;
But the calm was deceitful and sinister !
A lull like the lull of the treacherous sea—
For Hate in that moment had sworn to be
The Golden Leg's sole Legatee,
And that very night to administer !

HER DEATH.

'Tis a stern and startling thing to think
How often mortality stands on the brink
Of its grave without any misgiving ;
And yet in this slippery world of strife,
In the stir of human bustle so rife,
'There are daily sounds to tell us that Life
Is dying, and Death is living !

Ay, Beauty the Girl, and Love the Boy,
Bright as they are with hope and joy,
How their souls would sadden instanter,
To remember that one of those wedding-bells,
Which ring so merrily through the dells,
Is the same that knells
Our last farewells,
Only broken into a canter !

But breath and blood set doom at nought—
How little the wretched Countess thought,
When at night she unloosed her sandal,
That the Fates had woven her burial-cloth,
And that Death, in the shape of a Death's Head
Moth,
Was fluttering round her candle !

As she look'd at her clock of or-molu,
For the hours she had gone so wearily through
At the end of a day of trial—
How little she saw in her pride of prime
The dart of Death in the Hand of Time—
That hand which moved on the dial !

As she went with her taper up the stair,
How little her swollen eye was aware
That the Shadow which follow'd was double !
Or when she closed her chamber door,
It was shutting out, and for evermore,
The world—and its worldly trouble.

Little she dreamt, as she laid aside
Her jewels—after one glance of pride—
They were solemn bequests to Vanity—
Or when her robes she began to doff,
That she stood so near to the putting off
Of the flesh that clothes humanity.

And when she quench'd the taper's light,
How little she thought as the smoke took flight,
That her day was done—and merged in a night
Of dreams and duration uncertain—
Or along with her own,
That a Hand of Bone
Was closing mortality's curtain !

But life is sweet and mortality blind,
And youth is hopeful, and Fate is kind—
In concealing the day of sorrow ;
And enough is the present tense of toil—
For this world is, to all, a stiffish soil—
And the mind flies back with a glad recoil
From the debts not due till to-morrow.

Wherefore else does the Spirit fly
And bid its daily cares good-bye,
Along with its daily clothing ?
Just as the felon condemn'd to die—

With a very natural loathing—
Leaving the Sheriff to dream of ropes,
From his gloomy cell in a vision elopes
To a caper on sunny gleams and slopes,
Instead of the dance upon nothing.

Thus, even thus, the Countess slept,
While Death still nearer and nearer crept,
Like the Thane who smote the sleeping—
But her mind was busy with early joys,
Her golden treasures and golden toys,
That flash'd a bright
And golden light
Under lids still red with weeping.

The golden doll that she used to hug !
Her coral of gold, and the golden mug !
Her godfather's golden presents !
The golden service she had at her meals,
The golden watch, and chain, and seals,
Her golden scissors, and thread, and reels,
And her golden fishes and pheasants !

The golden guineas in silken purse—
And the Golden Legends she heard from her nurse
Of the Mayor in his gilded carriage—
And London streets that were paved with gold—
And the Golden Eggs that were laid of old—
With each golden thing
To the golden ring
At her own auriferous Marriage !

And still the golden light of the sun
Through her golden dream appear'd to run,
Though the night, that roared without, was one

To terrify seamen or gipsies—
While the moon, as if in malicious mirth,
Kept peeping down at the ruffled earth,
As though she enjoy'd the tempest's birth,
In revenge of her old eclipses.

But vainly, vainly, the thunder fell,
For the soul of the Sleeper was under a spell
That time had lately embitter'd—
The Count, as once at her foot he knelt—
That foot, which now he wanted to melt !
But—hush !—'twas a stir at her pillow she felt—
And some object before her glitter'd.

'Twas the Golden Leg !—she knew its gleam !
And up she started and tried to scream,—
But e'en in the moment she started—
Down came the limb, with a frightful smash,
And, lost in the universal flash
That her eyeballs made at so mortal a crash,
The Spark, call'd vital, departed !

.

Gold, still gold ! hard, hard yellow, and cold,
For gold she had lived, and she died for gold—
By a golden weapon—not oaken ;
In the morning they found her all alone—
Stiff, and bloody, and cold as stone—
But her Leg, the Golden Leg, was gone,
And the "Golden Bowl was broken !"

Gold—still gold ! it haunted her yet—
At the Golden Lion the Inquest met—
Its foreman, a carver and gilder—

And the Jury debated from twelve till three
What the Verdict ought to be,
And they brought it in as Felo de Se,
“ Because her own Leg had kill'd her ! ”

HER MORAL.

Gold ! Gold ! Gold ! Gold !
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammer'd, and roll'd ;
Heavy to get, and light to hold ;
Hoarded, barter'd, bought, and sold,
Stolen, borrow'd, squander'd, doled :
Spurn'd by the young, but hugg'd by the old
To the very verge of the churchyard mould ;
Price of many a crime untold ;
Gold ! Gold ! Gold ! Gold !
Good or bad a thousand fold !
How widely its agencies vary—
To save—to ruin—to curse—to bless—
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamp'd with the image of Good Queen Bess,
And now of a Bloody Mary.



ODES AND ADDRESSES.

ODE TO MR. GRAHAM, THE AERONAUT.

“Up with me!—up with me into the sky!”
WORDSWORTH—*On a Lark!*

DEAR GRAHAM, whilst the busy crowd,
The vain, the wealthy, and the proud,
Their meaner flights pursue,
Let us cast off the foolish ties
That bind us to the earth, and rise
And take a bird's-eye view!—

A few more whiffs of my cigar
And then, in Fancy's airy car,
Have with thee for the skies:—
How oft this fragrant smoke upcurled
Hath borne me from this little world,
And all that in it lies!—

Away!—away!—the bubble fills—
Farewell to earth and all its hills!—
We seem to cut the wind!—
So high we mount, so swift we go,
The chimney-tops are far below,
The Eagle's left behind!—

Ah me ! my brain begins to swim !—
The world is growing rather dim ;
 The steeples and the trees—
My wife is getting very small !
I cannot see my babe at all !—
 The Dollond, if you please !

Do, Graham, let me have a quiz,
Lord ! what a Lilliput it is,
 That little world of Mogg's !—
Are those the London Docks ?—that channel
The mighty Thames ?—a proper kennel
 For that small Isle of Dogs !—

What is that seeming tea-urn there ?
That fairy dome, St. Paul's !—I swear
 Wren must have been a Wren !—
And that small stripe ?—it cannot be
The City Road !—Good lack ! to see
 The little ways of men !

Little, indeed !—my eyeballs ache
To find a turnpike.—I must take
 Their tolls upon my trust !—
And where is mortal labour gone ?
Look, Graham, for a little stone
 Mac Adamized to dust !

Look at the horses !—less than flies !—
Oh, what a waste it was of sighs
 To wish to be a Mayor !
What is the honour ?—none at all,
One's honour must be very small
 For such a civic chair !—

And there's Guildhall !—'tis far aloof—
Methinks, I fancy through the roof
 Its little guardian Gogs,
Like penny dolls—a tiny show !—
Well—I must say they're ruled below
 By very little Logs !

Oh, Graham ! how the upper air
Alters the standards of compare ;
 One of our silken flags
Would cover London all about—
Nay, then – let's even empty out
 Another brace of bags !

Now for a glass of bright Champagne
Above the clouds !—Come, let us drain
 A bumper as we go :—
But hold !—for God's sake do not cant
The cork away—unless you want
 To brain your friends below.

Think ! what a mob of little men
Are crawling just within our ken,
 Like mites upon a cheese !—
Pshaw !—how the foolish sight rebukes
Ambitious thoughts !—can there be *Dukes*
 Of *Gloster* such as these !—

Oh ! what is glory ?—what is fame ?
Hark to the little mob's acclaim,
 'Tis nothing but a hum !—
A few near gnats would trump as loud
As all the shouting of a crowd
 That has so far to come !—

Well—they are wise that choose the near,
A few small buzzards in the ear,
 To organs ages hence !—
Ah me ! how distance touches all ;
It makes the true look rather small,
 But murders poor pretence.

“ The world recedes—it disappears !
Heaven opens on my eyes—my ears
 With buzzing noises ring ! ”—
A fig for Southey's Laureate lore !—
What's Rogers here ?—Who cares for Moore
 That hears the Angels sing !—

A fig for earth, and all its minions !—
We are above the world's opinions,
 Graham ! we'll have our own !—
Look what a vantage height we've got—
Now——*do* you think Sir Walter Scott
 Is such a Great Unknown ?

Speak up !—or hath he hid his name
To crawl thro' “ subways ” into fame,
 Like Williams of Cornhill ?—
Speak up, my lad !—when men run small
We'll show what's little in them all,
 Receive it how they will !—

Think now of Irving !—shall he preach
The princes down—shall he impeach
 The potent and the rich,
Merely on ethic stilts—and I
Not moralise at two miles high—
 The true didactic pitch !

Come :—what d'ye think of Jeffrey, sir?
Is Gifford such a Gulliver

In Lilliput's Review,
That like Colossus he should stride
Certain small brazen inches wide
For poets to pass through?

Look down ! the world is but a spot.
Now say—Is Blackwood's *low* or not,
For all the Scottish tone?
It shall not weigh us here—not where
The sandy burdens s lost in air—
Our lading—where is't flown?

Now—like you Croly's 'verse indeed—
In heaven—where one cannot read
The “ Warren ” on the wall?
What think you here of that man's fame?
Tho' Jerdan magnified his name,
To me 'tis very small !

And truly, is there such a spell
In those three letters, L. E. L.,
To witch 'a world with song?
On clouds the Byron did not sit,
Yet dared on Shakspeare's head to spit,
And say the world was wrong !

And shall not we? Let's think aloud !
'Thus being couched upon a cloud,
Graham, we'll have our eyes !
We felt the great when we were less,
But we'll retort on littleness
Now we are in the skies.

O Graham, Graham ! how I blame
The bastard blush—the petty shame
That used to fret me quite—
The little sores I covered then,
No sores on earth, nor sorrows when
The world is out of sight !

My name is Tims.—I am the man
That North's unseen, diminished clan
So scurvily abused !
I am the very P. A. Z.
The London Lion's small pin's head
So often hath refused !

Campbell—(you cannot see him here)—
Hath scorned my *lays*:—do his appear
Such great eggs from the sky?—
And Longman, and his lengthy Co.
Long, only, in a little Row,
Have thrust my poems by !

What else?—I'm poor, and much beset
With damned small duns—that is—in debt
Some grains of golden dust !
But only worth, above, is worth.—
What's all the credit of the earth ?
An inch of cloth on trust !

What's Rothschild here, that wealthy man !
Nay, worlds of wealth?—Oh, if you can
Spy out—the *Golden Ball* !
Sure as we rose, all money sank :
What's gold or silver now?—the Bank
Is gone—the 'Change and all !

What's all the ground-rent of the globe?—

Oh, Graham, it would worry Job

To hear its landlords prate !

But after this survey, I think

I'll ne'er be bullied more, nor shrink

From men of large estate !

And less, still less, will I submit

To poor mean acres' worth of wit—

I that have heaven's span—

I that like Shakspeare's self may dream

Beyond the very clouds, and seem

An Universal Man !

Mark, Graham, mark those gorgeous crowds !

Like Birds of Paradise the clouds

Are winging on the wind !

But what is grander than their range?

More lovely than their sun-set change?—

The free creative mind !

Well ! the Adults' School's in the air !

The greatest men are lessoned there

As well as the Lessee !

Oh could earth's Ellistons thus small!

Behold the greatest stage of all,

How humbled they would be !

“ Oh would some Power the giftie gie 'em,

To see themselves as others see 'em.”

'Twould much abate their fuss !

If they could think that from the skies

They are as little in our eyes

As they can think of us !

Of us? are we gone out of sight?
Lessened! diminished! vanished quite!
Lost to the tiny town!
Beyond the eagle's ken—the grope
Of Dollond's longest telescope!
Graham! we're going down!

Ah me! I've touched a string that opes
The airy valve!—the gas elopes—
Down goes our bright balloon!—
Farewell the skies! the clouds! I smell
The lower world! Graham, farewell,
Man of the silken moon!

The earth is close! the City nears—
Like a burnt paper it appears,
Studded with tiny sparks!
Methinks I hear the distant rout
Of coaches rumbling all about—
We're close above the Parks!

I hear the watchmen on their beats,
Hawking the hour about the streets.
Lord! what a cruel jar
It is upon the earth to light!
Well there's the finish of our flight!
I've smoked my last cigar!



ODE TO MR. M'ADAM.

"Let us take to the road."—*Beggars' Opera*.

M'ADAM, hail !

Hail, Roadian ! hail, Colossus ! who dost stand
Striding ten thousand turnpikes on the land !

Oh, universal Leveller ! all hail !

To thee, a good, yet stony-hearted man,

The kindest one, and yet the flintiest going—

To thee—how much for thy commodious plan,

Lanark Reformer of the Ruts, is Owing !

The Bristol mail,

Gliding o'er ways hitherto deemed invincible,

When carrying Patriots now shall never fail

Those of the most "*unshaken* public principle."

Hail to thee, Scot of Scots !

Thou northern light, amid those heavy men !

Foe to Stonehenge, yet friend to all beside,

Thou scatterest flints and favours far and wide,

From palaces to cots ;—

Dispenser of coagulated good !

Distributor of granite and of food !

Long may thy fame its even path march on

E'en when thy sons are dead !

Best benefactor ! though thou giv'st a stone

To those who ask for bread !

Thy first great trial in this mighty town

Was, if I rightly recollect, upon

That gentle hill which goeth

Down from "the County" to the Palace gate,

And, like a river, thanks to thee, now floweth,

Past the Old Horticultural Society—
The chemist Cobbs, the house of Howell and James,
Where ladies play high shawl and satin games—

A little *Hell* of lace !

And past the Athenæum, made of late,

Severs a sweet variety

Of milliners and booksellers who grace

Waterloo Place,

Making division, the Muse fears and guesses,

'Twixt Mr. Rivington's and Mr. Hessey's.

Thou stood'st thy trial, Mac ! and shaved the road

From Barber Beaumont's to the King's abode

So well, that paviors threw their rammers by,

Let down their tucked shirt-sleeves, and with a sigh

Prepared themselves, poor souls, to chip or die !

Next, from the palace to the prison, thou

Didst go, the highway's watchman, to thy beat—

Preventing though the *rattling* in the street,

Yet kicking up a row

Upon the stones—ah ! truly watchman-like,

Encouraging thy victims all to strike,

To further thy own purpose, Adam, daily ;—

Thou hast smoothed, alas, the path to the Old

Bailey !

And to the stony bowers

Of Newgate, to encourage the approach,

By caravan or coach—

Hast strewed the way with flints as soft as flowers.

Who shall dispute thy name !

Insculpt in stone in every street,

We soon shall greet

Thy trodden down, yet all unconquered fame !

Where'er we take, even at this time, our way,
 Nought see we, but mankind in open air,
 Hammering thy fame, as Chantrey would not dare :—

And with a patient care
 Chipping thy immortality all day !
 Demosthenes of old—that rare old man—
 Prophetically *followed*, Mac ! thy plan :—

For he, we know,
 (History says so,)
 Put *pebbles* in his mouth when he would speak
 The *smoothest* Greek !

It is "impossible, and cannot be."

But that thy genius hath,
 Besides the turnpike, many another path
 Trod, to arrive at popularity,
 O'er Pegasus, perchance, thou hast thrown a thigh,
 Nor ridden a roadster only, mighty Mac !
 And 'faith I'd swear, when on that wingèd hack,
 Thou hast observed the highways in the sky !
 Is the path up Parnassus rough and steep,

And "hard to climb," as Dr. B. would say ?
 Dost think it best for Sons of Song to keep

The noiseless *tenor* of their way ? (see Gray.)
 What line of road *should* poets take to bring
 Themselves unto those waters, loved the first !—
 Those waters which can wet a man to sing !

Which, like thy fame, "from *granite* basins burst,
 Leap into life, and, sparkling, woo the thirst ?"

That thou'rt a proser, even thy birthplace might
 Vouchsafe ;—and Mr. Cadell *may*, God wot,
 Have paid thee many a pound for many a blot—
 Cadell is a wayward wight !

Although no Walter, still thou art a Scot,
 And I can throw, I think, a little light
 Upon some works thou hast written for the town—
 And published, like a Lilliput Unknown !

“ Highways and Byeways,” is thy book, no doubt,
 (One whole edition's out,)

And next, for it is fair,

That Fame,

Seeing her children, should confess she had 'em :—

“ Some *Passages* from the life of Adam Blair” —

(Blair is a Scottish name,)

What are they, but thy own good roads, M'Adam ?

Oh ! indefatigable labourer

In the paths of men ! when thou shalt die, 'twill be
 A mark of thy surpassing industry,

That of the monument, which men shall rear
 Over thy most inestimable bone,

Thou didst thy very self lay the first stone !—

Of a right ancient line thou comest—through
 Each crook and turn we trace the unbroken clue,

Until we see thy sire before our eyes—

Rolling his gravel walks in Paradise !

But he, our great Mac Parent, erred, and ne'er

Have our walks since been fair !

Yet Time, who, like the merchant, lives on 'Change,
 For ever varying, through his varying range,

Time maketh all things even !

In this strange world, turning beneath high heaven !

He hath redeemed the Adams, and contrived—

(How are Time's wonders hived !)

In pity to mankind and to befriend 'em—

Time is above all praise)

That he, who first did make our evil ways,
Re-born in Scotland, should be first to mend 'em !



A FRIENDLY ADDRESS TO MRS. FRY,
IN NEWGATE.

“Sermons in stones.”—*As You Like It*.

“Out ! out ! damned spot.”—*Macbeth*.

I LIKE you, Mrs. Fry ! I like your name !

It speaks the very warmth you feel in pressing
In daily act round Charity's great flame—

I like the crisp Browne way you have of dressing,
Good Mrs. Fry ! I like the placid claim

You make to Christianity—professing
Love, and good *works*—of course you buy of Barton,
Beside the young *fry's* booksellers, Friend Darton !

I like, good Mrs. Fry, your brethren mute—

Those serious, solemn gentlemen that sport—

I should have said, that *wear*, the sober suit

Shaped like a court dress—but for heaven's court.

I like your sisters too—sweet Rachel's fruit—

Protestant nuns ! I like their stiff support

Of virtue—and I like to see them clad

With such a difference—just like good from bad !

I like the sober colours—not the wet ;

Those gaudy manufacturers of the rainbow—

Green, orange, crimson, purple, violet—

In which the fair, the flirting, and the vain, go—

The others are a chaste, severer set,
In which the good, the pious, and the plain, go—
They're moral *standards*, to know Christians by—
In short, they are your *colours*, Mrs. Fry!

As for the naughty tinges of the prism—
Crimson's the cruel uniform of war—
Blue—hue of brimstone—minds no catechism ;
And green is young and gay—not noted for
Goodness, or gravity, or quietism,
Till it is saddened down to tea-green, or
Olive—and purple's given to wine, I guess ;
And yellow is a convict by its dress !

They're all the devil's liveries, that men
And women wear in servitude to sin—
But how will they come off, poor motleys, when
Sin's wages are paid down, and they stand in
The Evil Presence? You and I know, then,
How all the party colours will begin,
To part—the *Pittite* hues will sadden there,
Whereas the *Foxite* shades will all show fair !

Witness their goodly labours one by one !
Russet makes garments for the needy poor—
Dove-colour preaches love to all, and *dun*
Calls every day at Charity's street-door—
Brown studies Scriptures, and bids women shun
All gaudy furnishing—*olive* doth pour
Oil into wounds : and *drab* and *slate* supply
Scholar and book in Newgate, Mrs. Fry !

Well ! Heaven forbid that I should discommend
The gratis, charitable, jail-endeavour !

When all persuasions in your praises blend—

The Methodist's creed and cry are, *Fry* for ever!
No—I will be your friend—and, like a friend,

Point out your very worst defect—Nay, never
Start at that word! But I *must* ask you why
You keep your school *in* Newgate, Mrs. Fry?

Too well I know the price our mother Eve

Paid for *her* schooling: but must all her
daughters

Commit a petty larceny, and thief—

Pay down a crime for “*entrance*” to your
“*quarters*?”

Your classes may increase, but I must grieve

Over your pupils at their bread and waters!

Oh, though it cost you rent—(and rooms run high)—

Keep your school *out* of Newgate, Mrs. Fry!

O save the vulgar soul before it's spoiled!

Set up your mounted sign *without* the gate—

And there inform the mind before 'tis soiled!

'Tis sorry writing on a greasy slate!

Nay, if you would not have your labours foiled,

Take it *inclining* towards a virtuous state,

Not prostrate and laid flat—else, woman meek,

The *upright* pencil will but hop and shriek!

Ah, who can tell how hard it is to drain

The evil spirit from the heart it preys in—

To bring sobriety to life again,

Choked with the vile Anacreontic raisin—

To wash Black Betty when her black's ingrain—

To stick a moral lacquer on Moll Brazen,

Of Suky Tawdry's habits to deprive her ;
To tame the wild-fowl ways of Jenny Diver !

Ah, who can tell how hard it is to teach
Miss Nancy Dawson on her bed of straw—
To make long Sal sew up the endless breach
She made in manners—to write heaven's own law
On hearts of granite.—Nay, how hard to preach,
In cells, that are not memory's—to draw
The moral thread, through the immoral eye
Of blunt Whitechapel natures, Mrs. Fry !

In vain you teach them baby-work within :
'Tis but a clumsy botchery of crime ;
'Tis but a tedious darning of old sin—
Come out yourself, and stitch up souls in time—
It is too late for scouring to begin
When virtue's ravelled out, when all the prime
Is worn away, and nothing sound remains ;
You'll fret the fabric out before the stains !

I like your chocolate, good Mrs. Fry !
I like your cookery in every way ;
I like your shrove-tide service and supply ;
I like to hear your sweet *Pandeans* play ;
I like the pity in your full-brimmed eye ;
I like your carriage and your silken gray,
Your dove-like habits, and your silent preaching ;
But I don't like your Newgatory teaching.

Come out of Newgate, Mrs. Fry ! Repair
Abroad, and find your pupils in the streets.
Oh, come abroad into the wholesome air,
And take your moral place, before Sin seats

Her wicked self in the Professor's chair.

Suppose some morals raw ! the true receipt's
To dress them in the pan, but do not try
To cook them in the fire, good Mrs. Fry !

Put on your decent bonnet, and come out !

Good lack ! the ancients did not set up schools
In jail—but at the *Porch* ! hinting, no doubt,

That Vice should have a lesson in the rules
Before 'twas whipt by law.—O come about,

Good Mrs. Fry ! and set up forms and stools
All down the Old Bailey, and thro' Newgate Street,
But not in Mr. Wontner's proper seat !

Teach Lady Barrymore, if, teaching, you

That peerless Peeress can absolve from dolour ;
Teach her it is not virtue to pursue

Ruin of blue, or any other colour ;
Teach her it is not Virtue's crown to rue,

Month after month, the unpaid drunken dollar ;
Teach her that " flooring Charleys " is a game
Unworthy one that bears a Christian name.

O come and teach our children—that aren't *ours*—

That heaven's straight pathway is a narrow way,
Not Broad St. Giles's, where fierce Sin devours

Children, like Time—or rather they both prey
On youth together—meanwhile Newgate low'rs

Even like a black cloud at the close of day,
To shut them out from any more blue sky :
Think of these helpless wretches, Mrs. Fry !

You are not nice—go into their retreats,

And make them Quakers, if you will.—'Twere best

They wore straight collars, and their shirts sans
pleats;

That they had hats *with* brims—that they were
drest

In garbs without *lappels*—than shame the streets

With so much raggedness,—You may invest
Much cash this way—but it will cost its price,
To give a good, round, real *cheque* to Vice!

In brief—Oh, teach the child its moral rote,

Not *in* the way from which 'twill not depart—
But *out*—out—out! Oh, bid it walk remote!

And if the skies are closed against the smart,
Even let him wear the single-breasted coat,

For that ensureth singleness of heart,—
Do what you will, his every want supply,
Keep him—but *out* of Newgate, Mrs. Fry!



ODE TO RICHARD MARTIN, ESQUIRE, M.P. FOR GALWAY.*

“*Martin*, in this, has proved himself a very
good Man!”—*Boxiana*.

How many sing of wars,
Of Greek and 'Trojan jars—
The butcheries of men!

The Muse hath a “Perpetual Ruby Pen!”

* The author of the Act of Parliament for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He was member for Galway in the first Parliament after the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Died. 1834.

Dabbling with heroes and the blood they spill ;
But no one sings the man
That, like a pelican,
Nourishes Pity with his tender *Bill* !

Thou Wilberforce of hacks !
Of whites as well as blacks,
Piebald and dapple-gray
Chestnut and bay—
No poet's eulogy thy name adorns !
But oxen, from the fens
Sheep—in their pens,
Praise thee, and red cows with their winding
horns !
Thou art sung on brutal pipes !
Drovers may curse thee,
Knackers asperse thee,
And sly M.P.'s bestow their cruel wipes ;
But the old horse neighs thee,
And zebras praise thee,
Asses—I mean, that have as many stripes !

Hast thou not taught the Drover to forbear,
In Smithfield's muddy, murderous, vile environ--
Staying his lifted bludgeon in the air !
Bullocks don't wear
Oxide of iron !

The cruel Jarvy thou hast summoned oft,
Enforcing mercy on the coarse Yahoo,
That thought his horse the *courser* of the two—
Whilst Swift smiled down aloft !—
O worthy pair ! for this, when ye inhabit
Bodies of Birds—(if so the spirit shifts

From flesh to feather)—when the clown uplifts
 His hands against the sparrow's nest, to *grab* it—
 He shall not harm the MARTINS and the *Swifts*!

Ah! when Dean Swift was *quick*, how he
 enhanced

The horse!—and humbled biped man like Plato!
 But now he's dead, the charger is mischanced—
 Gone backward in the world—and not advanced—
 Remember Cato!

Swift was the horse's champion—not the King's
 Whom Southey sings,

Mounted on Pegasus—would he were thrown!
 He'll wear that ancient hackney to the bone,
 Like a mere clothes-horse airing royal things!

Ah, well-a-day! the ancients did not use
 Their steeds so cruelly!—let it debar men
 From wonted rowelling and whip's abuse—

Look at the ancients' *Muse*!

Look at their *Carmen*!

O Martin! how thine eye—
 That one would think had put aside its laches—
 That can't bear gashes

Thro' any horse's side, must ache to spy
 That horrid window fronting Fetter Lane—
 For there's a nag the crows have picked for victual,

Or some man painted in a bloody vein—

Gods! is there no *Horse-spital*!

That such raw shows must sicken the humane!

Sure Mr. Whittle

Loves thee but little

To let that poor horse linger in his *pane*!

O build a Brooks's Theatre for horses !
 O wipe away the national reproach—
 And find a decent Vulture for their corpses !
 And in thy funeral track
 Four sorry steeds shall follow in each coach !
 Steeds that confess " the luxury of *woe* ! "
 True mourning steeds, in no extempore black,
 And many a wretched hack
 Shall sorrow for thee—sore with kick and blow
 And bloody gash—it is the Indian knack—
 (Save that the savage is his own tormentor)—
 Banting shall weep too in his sable scarf—
 The biped woe the quadruped shall enter,
 And Man and Horse go half and half,
 As if their griefs met in a common *Centaur* ?



ODE TO THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

" O breathe not his name ! "—*Moore.*

THOU Great Unknown !
 I do not mean Eternity, nor death,
 That vast incog. !
 For I suppose thou hast a living breath,
 Howbeit we know not from whose lungs 'tis blown,
 Thou man of fog !
 Parent of many children—child of none !
 Nobody's son !
 Nobody's daughter—but a parent still !
 Still but an ostrich parent of a batch
 Of orphan eggs—left to the world to hatch.
 Superlative Nil !

A vox and nothing more—yet not Vauxhall ;
 A head in papers, yet without a curl !

Not the Invisible Girl !

No hand—but a handwriting on a wall—

A popular nonentity,

Still called the same—without identity !

A lark, heard out of sight—

A nothing shined upon—invisibly bright,

“ Dark with excess of light ! ”

Constable's literary John-a-nokes—

The real Scottish wizard—and not witch.

Nobody—in a niche ;

Every one's hoax !

Maybe Sir Walter Scott—

Perhaps not !

Why dost thou so conceal and puzzle curious folks !

Thou—whom the second-sighted never saw,

The Master Fiction of fictitious history !

Chief Nong tong paw !

No mister in the world—and yet all mystery !

The “ tricky spirit ” of a Scotch Cock Lane—

A *novel* Junius puzzling the world's brain—

A man of magic—yet no talisman !

A man of clair obscure—not he o' the moon !

A star—at noon.

A non-descriptus in a caravan,

A private—of no corps—a northern light

In a dark lantern—Bogie in a crape—

A figure—but no shape ;

A visor—and no knight ;

The real abstract hero of the age ;

The staple Stranger of the stage ;

A Some One made in every man's presumption,

Frankenstein's monster—but instinct with gumption;
Another strange state captive in the north,
Constable-guarded in an iron mask—

Still let me ask,

Hast thou no silver-platter,
No door-plate, or no card—or some such matter,
To scrawl a name upon, and then cast forth?

Thou Scottish Barmecide, feeding the hunger
Of Curiosity with airy gammon!

Thou mystery-monger,
Dealing it out like middle cut of salmon,
That people buy and can't make head or tail of it;
(Howbeit that puzzle never hurts the sale of it;)
Thou chief of authors mystic and abstractical,
That lay their proper bodies on the shelf—
Keeping thyself so truly to thyself,

Thou Zimmerman made practical!
Thou secret fountain of a Scottish style,
That, like the Nile,
Hideth its source wherever it is bred,
But still keeps disemboguing
(Not disembroguing)

Thro' such broad sandy mouths without a head!
Thou disembodied author—not yet dead—
The whole world's literary Absentee!

Ah! wherefore hast thou fled,
Thou learned Nemo—wise to a degree,
Anonymous LL.D.!

Thou nameless captain of the nameless gang
That do—and inquests cannot say who did it!

Wert thou at Mrs. Donatty's death-pang?
Hast thou made gravy of Weare's watch—or hid it?

Hast thou a Blue-Beard chamber? Heaven forbid it!

I should be very loth to see thee hang!

I hope thou hast an alibi well planned,

An innocent, altho an ink-black hand.

Tho' thou hast newly turned thy private bolt on

The curiosity of all invaders—

I hope thou art merely closeted with Colton,

Who knows a little of the *Holy Land*,

Writing thy next new novel—The Crusaders!

Perhaps thou wert even born

To be Unknown.—Perhaps hung, some foggy morn,

At Captain Coram's charitable wicket,

Pinned to a ticket

That Fate had made illegible, foreseeing

The future great unmentionable being.—

Perhaps thou hast ridden

A scholar poor on St. Augustine's Back,

Like Chatterton, and found a dusty pack

Of Rowley novels in an old chest hidden;

A little hoard of clever simulation,

That took the town—and Constable has bidden

Some hundred pounds for a continuation—

To keep and clothe thee in genteel starvation.

I liked thy *Waverley*—first of thy breeding;

I liked its modest "sixty years ago,"

As if it was not meant for ages' reading.

I don't like *Ivanhoe*,

Tho' *Dymoke* does—it makes him think of clattering

In iron overalls before the king,

Secure from battering, to ladies flattering,

Tuning his challenge to the gauntlet's ring—

Oh better far than all that anvil clang

It was to hear thee touch the famous string
Of Robin Hood's tough bow and make it twang,
Rousing him up, all verdant, with his clan,
Like Sagittarian Pan !

I like Guy Mannering—but not that sham son
Of Brown.—I like that literary Sampson,
Nine-tenths a Dyer, with a smack of Porson.
I like Dirk Hatteraick, that rough sea Orson

That slew the Gauger ;
And Dandie Dinmont, like old Ursa Major,
And Merrilies, young Bertram's old defender,
That Scottish Witch of Endor,
That doomed thy fame. She was the Witch, I take it,
To tell a great man's fortune—or to make it !

I like thy Antiquary. With his fit on,
He makes me think of Mr. Britton,
Who has—or had—within his garden wall,
A *Miniature Stone Henge*, so very small
The sparrows find it difficult to sit on ;
And Dousterswivel, like Poyais' M'Gregor ;
And Edie Ochiltree, that old *Blue Beggar*,
Painted so cleverly,

I think thou surely knowest Mrs. Beverly !
I like thy Barber—him that fired the *Beacon*—
But that's a tender subject now to speak on !

I like long-armed Rob Roy.—His very charms
Fashioned him for renown !—In sad sincerity,
The man that robs or writes must have long arms,
If he's to hand his deeds down to posterity !

Witness Miss Biffin's posthumous prosperity !
 Her poor brown crumpled mummy (nothing
 more)

Bearing the name she bore,
 A thing Time's tooth is tempted to destroy !
 But Roys can never die—why else, in verity,
 Is Paris echoing with "Vive le *Roy*?"

Ay, Rob shall live again, and deathless Di
 Vernon, of course, shall often live again—
 Whilst there's a stone in Newgate, or a chain,
 Who can pass by
 Nor feel the Thief's in prison and at hand?
 There be Old Bailey Jarvys on the stand!

I like thy Landlord's Tales!—I like that Idol
 Of love and Lammermoor—the blue-eyed maid
 That led to church the mounted cavalcade,

And then pulled up with such a bloody bridal !
 Throwing equestrian Hymen on his haunches—
 I like the family (not silver) branches
 That hold the tapers

To light the serious legend of Montrose.—
 I like M'Aulay's second-sighted vapours,
 As if he could not walk or talk alone,
 Without the Devil—or the Great Unknown—

Dalgetty is the dearest of Ducrows !
 I like St. Leonard's Lily—drenched with dew !
 I like thy Vision of the Covenanters,
 That bloody-minded Graham shot and slew.

I like the battle lost and won ;
 The hurly-burly's bravely done,
 The warlike gallops and the warlike canters !
 I like that girded chieftain of the ranters,

Ready to preach down heathens, or to grapple.

With one eye on his sword

And one upon the Word—

How *he* would cram the Caledonian Chapel !

I like stern Claverhouse, though he doth dapple

His raven steed with blood of many a corse—

I like dear Mrs. Headrigg, that unravels

Her text of Scripture on a trotting horse—

She is so like Rae Wilson when he travels !

I like thy Kenilworth—but I'm not going

To take a Retrospective Re-Review

Of all thy dainty novels—merely showing

The old familiar faces of a few,

The question to renew,

How thou canst leave such deeds without a
name,

Forego the unclaimed dividends of fame,

Forego the smiles of literary houris—

Midlothian's trump and Fife's shrill note of praise,

And all the Carse of Gowrie's,

When thou might'st have thy statue in Cromarty—

Or see thy image on Italian trays,

Betwixt Queen Caroline and Buonaparté,

Be painted by the Titian of R.A.'s,

Or vie in signboards with the Royal Guelph !

P'rhaps have thy bust set cheek by jowl with

Homer's,

P'rhaps send our plaster proxies of thyself

To other Englands with Australian roamers—

Mayhap, in Literary Owhyhee

Displace the native wooden gods, or be

The China-Lar of a Canadian shelf !

It is not modesty that bids thee hide—
She never wastes her blushes out of sight :

It is not to invite

The word's decision, for thy fame is tried—
And thy fair deeds are scattered far and wide,
Even royal heads are with thy readers reckoned—
From men in trencher caps to trencher scholars

In crimson collars,

And learned sergeants in the Forty-second !

Whither by land or sea art thou not beckoned ?

Mayhap exported from the Frith of Forth,

Defying distance and its dim control ;

Perhaps read about Stromness, and reckoned
worth

A brace of Miltons for capacious soul—

Perhaps studied in the whalers, further north,
And set above ten Shakspeares near the pole !

Oh, when thou writest by Aladdin's lamp,

With such a giant genius at command,

For ever at thy stamp,

To fill thy treasury from Fairy Land,

When haply thou might'st ask the pearly hand

Of some great British Vizier's eldest daughter,

Tho' princes sought her,

And lead her in procession hymeneal,

Oh, why dost thou remain a Beau Ideal !

Why stay, a ghost, on the Lethean Wharf,

Enveloped in Scotch mist and gloomy fogs ?

Why, but because thou art some puny Dwarf,

Some hopeless Imp, like Riquet with the Tuft,

Fearing, for all thy wit, to be rebuffed,

Or bullied by our great reviewing Gogs !

What in this masquing age
Maketh Unknowns so many and so shy ?

What but the critic's page ?
One hath a cast, he hides from the world's eye ;
Another hath a wen—he won't show where ;

A third has sandy hair,
A hunch upon his back, or legs awry,
Things for a vile reviewer to espy !
Another has a mangel-wurzel nose—

Finally, this is dimpled,
Like a pale crumpet face, or that is pimpled,
Things for a monthly critic to expose—
Nay, what is thy own case—that being small,
Thou choolest to be nobody at all !

Well, thou art prudent, with such puny bones—

E'en like Elshender, the mysterious elf,
That shadowy revelation of thyself—
To build thee a small hut of haunted stones—
For certainly the first pernicious man
That ever saw thee, would quickly draw thee
In some vile literary caravan—

Shown for a shilling
Would be thy killing,
Think of Crachami's miserable span :
No tinier frame the tiny spark could dwell in
Than there it fell in—
But when she felt herself a show, she tried
To shrink from the world's eye, poor dwarf ! and
died !

Oh, since it was thy fortune to be born
A dwarf on some Scotch *Inch*, and then to flinch

From all the Gog-like jostle of great men,
 Still with thy small crow pen
 Amuse and charm thy lonely hours forlorn—
 Still Scottish story daintily adorn,
 Be still a shade—and when this age has fled,
 When we poor sons and daughters of reality
 Are in our graves forgotten and quite dead,
 And Time destroys our mottoes of morality—
 The lithographic hand of Old Mortality
 Shall still restore thy emblem on the stone,
 A featureless death's head,
 And rob Oblivion ev'n of the Unknown !



ODE TO JOSEPH GRIMALDI, SENIOR.*

“ This fellow's wise enough to play the fool,
 And to do that well craves a kind of wit.”
 —*Twelfth Night*.

JOSEPH ! they say thou'st left the stage,
 To toddle down the hill of life,
 And taste the flannelled ease of age,
 Apart from pantomimic strife—
 “ Retired—(for Young would call it so)—
 The world shut out ”—in Pleasant Row !

And hast thou really washed at last
 From each white cheek the red half-moon ?
 And all thy public Clownship cast,
 To play the Private Pantaloon ?

* The celebrated clown, who took leave of the stage in 1828, at Drury Lane Theatre. He was born in 1779, and died 1837.

All youth—all ages—yet to be,
Shall have a heavy miss of thee !

Thou didst not preach to make us wise—

Thou hadst no finger in our schooling—
Thou didst not “lure us to the skies”—

Thy simple, simple trade was—Fooling !
And yet, heaven knows ! we could—we can—
Much “better spare a better man !”

Oh, had it pleased the gout to take *

The reverend Croly from the stage,
Or Southey, for our quiet's sake,
Or Mr. Fletcher, Cupid's sage,
Or, d——e ! namby-pamby Poole—
Or any other clown or fool !

Go, Dibdin—all that bear the name,

Go, Byway Highway man ! go ! go !

Go, Skeffy—man of painted fame,

But leave thy partner, painted Joe !
I could bear Kirby on the wane,
Or Signor Paulo with a sprain !

Had Joseph Wilfred Parkins made

His grey hair scarce in private peace—

Had Waithman sought a rural shade—

Or Cobbett ta'en a turnpike lease—

Or Lisle Bowles gone to *Balaam Hill*—

I think I could be cheerful still !

Had Medwin left off, to his praise,

Dead lion kicking, like—a friend !—

Had long, long Irving gone his ways,

To muse on death at *Ponder's End*—

Or Lady Morgan taken leave
Of Letters—still I might not grieve !

But Joseph—everybody's Jo !
Is gone—and grieve I will and must !
As Hamlet did for Yorick, so

Will I for thee (tho' not yet dust),
And talk as he did when he missed
The kissing-crust that he had kissed !

Ah, where is now thy rolling head !
Thy winking, reeling, *drunken* eyes,
(As old Catullus would have said,)

Thy oven-mouth, that swallowed pies—
Enormous hunger—monstrous drouth !
Thy pockets greedy as thy mouth !

Ah, where thy ears, so often cuffed !—
Thy funny, flapping, filching hands !—
Thy partridge body, always stuffed
With waifs and strays, and contrabands !
Thy foot—like Berkeley's *Footie*—for why ?
'Twas often made to wipe an eye !

Ah, where thy legs—that witty pair—
For “ great wits jump ”—and so did they !
Lord ! how they leaped in lamp-light air !
Capered—and bounced—and strode away !—
That years should tame the legs—alack !
I've seen spring thro' an Almanack !

But bounds will have their bound—the shocks
Of Time will cramp the nimblest toes ;
And those that frisked in silken clocks
May look to limp in fleecy hose—

One only (Champion of the ring)
 Could ever make his Winter—Spring !

And gout, that owns no odds between
 The toe of Czar and toe of Clown,
 'Will visit—but I did not mean
 To moralize, though I am grown
 Thus sad—Thy going seemed to beat
 A muffled drum for Fun's retreat !

And, may be—'tis no time to smother
 A sigh, when two prime wags of London,
 Are gone—thou, Joseph, one—the other
 A Joe !—" sic transit gloria *Munden* !"
 A third departure some insist on—
 Stage-apoplexy threatens Liston !—

Nay, then, let Sleeping Beauty sleep
 With ancient "*Dozey*" to the dregs—
 Let Mother Goose wear mourning deep,
 And put a hatchment o'er her eggs !
 Let Farly weep—for Magic's man
 Is gone—his Christmas Caliban !

Let Kemble, Forbes, and Willet rain,
 As tho' they walked behind thy bier—
 For since thou wilt not play again,
 What matters—if in heaven or here !
 Or in thy grave, or in thy bed !
 There's *Quick*,* might just as well be dead !

Oh, how will thy departure cloud
 The lamp-light of the little breast !

* One of the old actors of "*Rapid*."

The Christmas child will grieve aloud
 To miss his broadest friend and best -
 Poor urchin ! what avails to him
 The cold New Monthly's *Ghost of Grimm* ?
 For who like thee could ever stride
 Some dozen paces to the mile !
 The motley, medley coach provide—
 Or like Joe Frankenstein compile
 The *vegetable man* complete !—
 A proper *Covent Garden* feat !
 Oh, who like thee could ever drink,
 Or eat—swill—swallow—bolt—and choke !
 Nod, weep, and hiccup—sneeze and wink !—
 Thy very yawn was quite a joke !
 Tho' Joseph Junior acts no ill,
 " There's no Fool like the old Fool " still !
 Joseph, farewell ! dear funny Joe !
 We met with mirth—we part in pain !
 For many a long, long year must go,
 Ere Fun can see thy like again—
 For Nature does not keep great stores
 Of perfect Clowns—that are not *Boors* !



AN ADDRESS TO THE STEAM WASHING COMPANY,

" *Archer* How many are there, *Scrub* ?
Scrub. Five and forty, sir."—*Beaux Stratagem*
 " For shame—let the linen alone. "
 —*Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Mr. SCRUB—Mr. Slop—or whoever you be !
 The cock of Steam Laundries—the head Patentee

Of Associate Cleansers—chief founder and prime
Of the firm for the wholesale distilling of grime—
Co-partners and dealers in linen's propriety—
That make washing public—and wash in society—
O lend me your ear ! if that ear can forego,
For a moment, the music that bubbles below—
From your new Surrey Geysers all foaming and hot—
That soft "*simmer's* sang" so endeared to the Scot—
If your hands may stand still, or your steam, without
danger—

If your suds will not cool, and a mere simple stranger,
Both to you and to washing, may put in a rub—
O wipe out your Amazon arms from the tub—
And lend me your ear—let me modestly plead
For a race that your labours may soon supersede—
For a race that, now washing no living affords—
Like Grimaldi, must leave their aquatic old boards,
Not with pence in their pockets to keep them at ease.
Not with bread in the funds—or investments of
cheese—

But to droop like sad willows that lived by a stream,
Which the sun has sucked up into vapour and steam.
Ah, look at the Laundress, before you begrudge
Her hard daily bread to that laudable drudge—
When chanticler singeth his earliest matins,
She slips her amphibious feet in her pattens,
And beginneth her toil while the morn is still grey,
As if she was washing the night into day—
Not with sleeker or rosier fingers Aurora
Beginneth to scatter the dewdrops before her ;
Not Venus that rose from the billows so early,
Looked down on the foam with a forehead more
pearly—

Her head is involved in an aerial mist,
And a bright-beaded bracelet encircles her wrist ;
Her visage glows warm with the ardour of duty ;
She's Industry's moral—she's all moral beauty !
Growing brighter and brighter at every rub—
Would any man ruin her?—No, Mr. Scrub !
No man that is manly would work her mishap—
No man that is manly would covet her cap—
Nor her apron—her hose—nor her gown made of
stuff—

Nor her gin—nor her tea—nor her wet pinch of snuff !
Alas ! so *she* thought—but that slippery hope
Has betrayed her, as tho' she had trod on her
soap !

And she—whose support—like the fishes that fly,
Was to have her fins wet, must now drop from her
sky—

She whose living it was, and a part of her fare,
To be damped once a day, like the great white sea
bear,

With her hands like a sponge, and her head like a
mop—

Quite a living absorbent that revelled in slop—
She that paddled in water, must walk upon sand,
And sigh for her deeps like a turtle on land !

Lo, then, the poor Laundress, all wretched she
stands,

Instead of a counterpane, wringing her hands !
All haggard and pinched, going down in life's vale,
With no faggot for burning, like Allan-a-dale !
No smoke from her flue, and no steam from her pane,
There once she watched heaven, fearing God and the
rain—

Or gazed o'er her bleachfield so fairly engrossed,
Till the lines wandered idle from pillar to post !
Ah ! where are the playful young pinners—ah, where
The harlequin quilts that cut capers in air—
The brisk waltzing stockings, the white and the black,
That danced on the tight-rope, or swung on the
slack—

The light sylph-like garments so tenderly pinned,
That blew into shape, and embodied the wind !
There was white on the grass—there was white on the
spray—

Her garden—it looked like a garden of May !
But now all is dark, not a shirt's on a shrub—
You've ruined her prospects in life, Mr. Scrub !
You've ruined her custom—now families drop her—
From her silver reduced—nay, reduced from her
copper !

The last of her washing is done at her eye,
One poor little kerchief that never gets dry !
From mere lack of linen she can't lay a cloth,
And boils neither barley nor alkaline broth—
But her children come round her as victuals grow scant,
And recall, with foul faces, the source of their want—
When she thinks of their poor little mouths to be fed,
And then thinks of her trade that is utterly dead,
And even its pearlashes laid in the grave—
Whilst her tub is a dry rotting, stave after stave,
And the greatest of Coopers, ev'n he that they dub
Sir Astley, can't bind up her heart or her tub—
Need you wonder she curses your bones, Mr. Scrub ?
Need you wonder, when steam has deprived her of
bread,

If she prays that the evil may visit *your* head—

Nay, scald all the heads of your Washing Committee—
 If she wishes you all the soot blacks of the city—
 In short, not to mention all plagues without number,
 If she wishes you all in the *Wash* at the Humber !

Ah, perhaps in some moment of drouth and despair,
 When her linen got scarce, and her washing grew
 rare—

When the sum of her suds might be summed in a
 bowl,

And the rusty cold iron quite entered her soul—
 When, perhaps, the last glance of her wandering eye
 Had caught "the Cock Laundresses' Coach" going by,
 Or her lines that hung idle, to waste the fine weather,
 And she sought of her wrongs and her rights both
 together,

In a lather of passion that frothed as it rose,
 Too angry for grammar, too lofty for prose,
 On her sheet—if a sheet were still left her—to write,
 Some remonstrance like this then, perchance, saw the
 light—

LETTER OF REMONSTRANCE FROM BRIDGET JONES.

*To the Noblemen and Gentlemen forming the
 Washing Committee.*

It's a shame, so it is—men can't Let alone
 Jobs as is Woman's right to do—and go about their
 Own—

Theirs Reforms enuff Alreddy without your new
 schools

For washing to sit Up—and push the Old Tubs from
 their stools !

But your just like the Raddicals—for upsetting of
the Sudds

When the world wagged well enuff—and Women
washed your old dirty duds,

I m Certain sure Enuff your Ann Sisters had no steem
Indians, that's Flat—

But I warrant your Four Fathers went as Tidy and
gentlemanny for all that—

I suppose your the Family as lived in the Great Kittle
I see on Clapham Commun, some times a very con-
siderable period back when I were little,

And they Said it went with Steem—But that was a
joke !

For I never see none come of it—that's out of it—but
only sum Smoak—

And for All your Power of Horses about your Indians
you never had but 'Two

In my time to draw you About to Fairs—and hang
you, you know that's true !

And for All your fine Perspectuses—howsomever you
bewhich 'em,

Theirs as Pretty ones off Primerows Hill, as ever a
one at Mitchum,

Thof I cant sea What Prospectives and washing has
with one another to Do—

It ant as if Birds'eye Hankicher could take a Birds-
high view !

But Thats your look out—I've not much to do with
that—But pleas God to hold up fine,

Id show you caps and pinneres and small things as
lilliwhit as Ever crosst the Line,

Without going any Father off then Little Parodies
Place,

And Thats more than you Can—and Ill say it behind
your face—
But when Folks talks of washing, it ant for you to
Speak—
As kept Dockter Pattyson out of his Shirt for a Weak !
Thinks I, when I heard it—Well, there's a pretty go !
That comes o' not marking of things or washing out
the marks, and Huddling 'em up so !
Till Their friends comes and owns them, like
drownded corpeses in a Vault,
But may Hap you havint Larned to spel—and That
ant your Fault,
Only you ought to leafe the Linnins to them as has
Larned—
For if it warnt for Washing—and whare Bills is con-
cerned
What's the Yuse, of all the World, for a Wommans
Headication,
And Their Being maid Schollards of Sundays—fit for
any Cityation.

Well, what I says is This—when every Kittle has
its spout,
Theirs no need for Companys to puff steem about !
To be sure its very Well, when Their ant enuff Wind
For blowing up Boats with—but not to hurt human
kind
Like that Pearkins with his Blunderbush, that's loaded
with hot water,
Thof a X Sherrif might know Better, than make
things for slaughtter,
As if War warnt Cruel enuff—wherever it befalls,

Without shooting poor sogers, with sich scalding hot balls—

But thats not so Bad as a Sett of Bear Faced Scrubbs
As joins their Sopes together, and sits up Steem
rubbing Clubs,

For washing Dirt Cheap—and eating other Peple's
grubs !

Which is all verry Fine for you and your Patent Tea,
But I wonders How Poor Wommen is to get Their
Beau-He !

They must drink Hunt wash (the only wash God
nose there will be !)

And their Little drop of Somethings as they takes for
their Goods,

When you and your Steem has ruined (G—d forgive
mee) their lively Hoods,

Poor Wommen as was born to Washing in their
youth !

And now must go and Larn other Businesses Four
Sooth !

But if so be They leave their Lines what are they to
go at—

They won't do for Angell's—nor any Trade like
That,

Nor we cant Sow Babby Work—for that's all Be-
spoke—

For the Queakers in Bridle ! and a vast of the con-
fined folk

Do their own of Themselves—even the bettermost of
em—aye, and evn them of middling degrees—

Why Lauk help you Babby Linen ant Bread and
Cheese !

Nor we can't go a hammering the roads into Dust,

But we must all go and be Bankers—like Mr. Marshes
and Mr. Chamberses—and that's what we must !

God nose you ought to have more Concern for our
Sects,

When you nose you have sucked us and hanged
round our Mutherly necks,

And remembers what you Owes to Wommen Besides
washing—

You ant, blame you ! like Men to go a slushing and
sloshing

In mop caps, and pattins, adoing of Females Labers
And prettily jeared At you great Horse God Meril

things, ant you now by your next door naybors—

Lawk I thinks I see you with your Sleeves tuckt up,

No more like Washing than is drownding of a Pupp,

And for all Your Fine Water Works going round and
round,

They'll scrunch your Bones some day—I'll be bound,

And no more nor be a gudgement—for it cant come
to good

To sit up agin Providince, which your a doing—nor
not fit It should,

For man warnt maid for Wommens starvation,

Nor to do away Laundrisses as is Links of the Crea-
tion—

And cant be dun without in any Country But a naked
Hottinpot Nation.

Ah, I wish our Minister would take one of your
Tubbs

And preach a Sermon in it, and give you some good
rubs—

But I warrants you reads (for you cant spel we nose)
nyther Bybills or good Tracks,

Or youd no better than Taking the close off ones
Backs—

And let your neighbors oxin and Asses alone—

And every Thing thats hern—and give every one their
Hone !

Well, its God for us Al, and every Washer
Wommen for herself,

And so you might, without shoving any of us off the
shelf

But if you warnt Noddis you Let wommen abe

And pull of Your Pattins—and leave the washing to we

That nose what's what—Or mark what I say,

Youl make a fine Kittle of fish of Your Close some
Day—

When the Aulder men wants Their Bibs, and their
ant nun at all,

And Cris mass cum—and never a Cloth to lay in Gild
Hall,

Or send a damp shirt to his Woship the Mare

Till hes rumatiz Poor Man, and cant set uprite to do
good in his Harm-Chare—

Besides Miss-Matching Larned Ladys Hose, as is sent
for you not to wash (for you dont wash) but to
stew

And make Peples Stockins yellor as oght to be Blew,

With a vast more like That—and all along of Steem,

Which warnt meand by Nater for any sich skeam—

But thats your Losses, and youl have to make It Good,

And I cant say I'm Sorry afore God if you shoud,

For men mought Get their Bread a great many
ways

Without taking ourn—aye, and Moor to your Prays.

You might go and skim the creme off Mr. Muck-
 Adams milky ways—that's what you might,
 Or bete Carpets—or get into Parleamint—or drive
 Crabrolays from morning to night,
 Or, if you must be of our sects, be Watchmen, and
 slepe upon a poste !
 (Which is an od way of sleping, I must say—and a
 very hard pillow at most,)
 Or you might be any trade, as we are not on that I'm
 awares,
 Or be Watermen now, (not Water-wommen,) and
 roe peple up and down Hungerford stares,
 Or if You Was even to Turn Dust Men a *dry sifting*
 Dirt !
 But you oughtint to Hurt Them as never Did You no
 Hurt !

Yourn with Anymocity,

BRIDGET JONES.



ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY.*

“By the North Pole, I do challenge thee !”—*Love's Labour's Lost*.

PARRY, my man ! has thy brave leg
 Yet struck its foot against the peg
 On which the world is spun ?
 Or hast thou found No Thoroughfare
 Writ by the hand of Nature there
 Where man has never run !

* The Arctic navigator, Sir William Parry, was born 1790, died 1855. He made four voyages to the North Pole. This ode was written on his third voyage.

Hast thou yet traced the Great Unknown
Of channels in the Frozen Zone,
Or held at Icy Bay,
Hast still thou missed the proper track
For homeward Indiamen that lack
A bracing by the way ?

Still hast thou wasted time and trouble
On nothing but the North-Sea Bubble
Of geographic scholar ?
Or found new ways for ships to shape,
Instead of winding round the Cape,
A short cut thro' the collar !

Hast found the way that sighs were sent to *
The Pole—tho' God knows whom they went to !
That track revealed to Pope—
Or if the Arctic waters sally,
Or terminate in some blind alley,
A chilly path to grope ?

Alas ! tho' Ross, in love with snows,
Has painted them *couleur de rose*,
It is a dismal doom,
As Claudio saith, to winter thrice,
“ In regions of thick-ribbèd ice ”—
All bright—and yet all gloom !

'Tis well for Gheber souls that sit
Before the fire and worship it
With pecks of Wallsend coals,

* “ And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.”—*Eloisa to Abelard*.

With feet upon the fender's front,
Roasting their corns—like Mr. Hunt—
To speculate on poles.

'Tis easy for our Naval Board—
'Tis easy for our Civic Lord—
Of London and of ease,
That lies in ninety feet of down,
With fur on his nocturnal gown,
To talk of Frozen Seas !

'Tis fine for Monsieur Ude to sit,
And prate about the mundane spit,
And babble of *Cook's* track—
He'd roast the leather off his toes,
Ere he would trudge thro' polar snows,
To plant a British *Jack* !

Oh, not the proud licentious great,
That travel on a carpet skate,
Can value toils like thine !
What 'tis to take a Hecla range,
Through ice unknown to Mrs. Grange,
And alpine lumps of brine !

But we, that mount the Hill o' Rhyme,
Can tell how hard it is to climb
The lofty slippery steep.
Ah ! there are more Snow Hills than that
Which doth black Newgate, like a hat,
Upon its forehead keep.

Perchance thou'rt now—while I am writing—
Feeling a bear's wet grinder biting
About thy frozen spine !

Or thou thyself art eating whale,
Oily, and underdone, and stale,
That, haply, crossed thy line !

But I'll not dream such dreams of ill—
Rather will I believe thee still
Safe cellared in the snow—
Reciting many a gallant story,
Of British kings and British glory,
To crony Esquimaux—

Cheering that dismal game where Night
Makes one slow move from black to white
Thro' all the tedious year—
Or smitten by some fond frost fair,
That combed out crystals from her hair,
Wooing a seal-skin Dear !

So much a long communion tends,
As Byron says, to make us friends
With what we daily view—
God knows the daintiest taste may come
To love a nose that's like a plum,
In marble, cold and blue !

To dote on air, an oily fleece !
As tho' it hung from Helen o' Greece—
They say that love prevails
Ev'n in the veriest polar land—
And surely she may steal thy hand
That used to steal thy nails !

But ah, ere thou art fixt to marry,
And take a polar Mrs. Parry,
Think of a six months' gloom—

Think of the wintry waste, and hers,
Each furnished with a dozen *furs*,
Think of thine icy *dome* !

Think of the children born to *blubber*,
Ah me ! hast thou an Indian rubber
Inside !—to hold a meal
For months—about a stone and half
Of whale, and part of a sea calf—
A fillet of salt veal—

Some walrus ham—no trifle but
A decent steak—a solid cut
Of seal—no wafer slice !
A reindeer's tongue and drink beside !
Gallons of Sperm—not rectified !
And pails of water-ice !

Oh, canst thou fast and then feast thus ?
Still come away, and teach to us
Those blessed alternations—
To-day to run our dinners fine,
To feed on air and then to dine
With Civic Corporations—

To save th' Old Bailey's daily shilling,
And then to take a half-year's filling
In P. N.'s pious Row—
When asked to Hock and haunch o' ven'son,
Thro' something we have worn our pens on
For Longman and his Co.

O come and tell us what the Pole is—
Whether it singular and sole is—
Or straight, or crooked bent—

If very thick or very thin—
Made of what wood—and if akin
To those there be in Kent.

There's Combe, there's Spurzheim, and there's
Gall,
Have talked of polls—yet, after all,
What has the public learned?
And Hunt's account must still defer
He sought the *poll* at Westminster—
And is not yet *returned*!

Alvanly asks if whist, dear soul,
Is played in snow-storms near the Pole,
And how the fur-man deals?
And Eldon doubts if it be true,
That icy Chancellors really do
Exist upon the *seals*!

Barrow, by well-fed office grates,
Talks of his own bechristened Straits;
And longs that he were there;
And Croker, in his cabriolet,
Sighs o'er his brown horse, at his Bay,
And pants to cross the *mer*!

O come away, and set us right,
And, haply, throw a northern light
On questions such as these:—
Whether, when this drowned world was lost,
The surflux waves were locked in frost,
And turned to Icy Seas!

Is Ursa Major white or black?
Or do the Polar tribes attack

Their neighbours—and what for?
Whether they ever play at cuffs,
And then, if they take off their muffs
In pugilistic war?

Tell us is *Winter* champion there,
As in our milder fighting air?
Say, what are *Chilly* loans?
What cures they have for rheums beside,
And if their hearts get ossified
From eating bread of bones?

Whether they are such dwarfs—the quicker
To circulate the vital-liquor *—
And then, from head to heel—
How short the Methodist must choose
Their dumpy envoys not to lose
Their toes in spite of zeal?

Whether 'twill soften or sublime it
To preach of Hell in such a climate—
Whether may Wesley hope
To win their souls—or that old function
Of seals—with the extreme of unction—
Bespeaks them for the Pope?

Whether the lamps will e'er be “learnèd”
Where six months’ “midnight oil” is burnèd,
Or letters must defer
With people that have never conned
An A, B, C, but lived beyond
The *Sound of Lancaster!*

* Buffon.

O come away at any rate—
 Well hast thou earned a downier state—
 With all thy hardy peers—
 Good lack, thou must be glad to smell dock,
 And rub thy feet with opodeldock,
 After such frosty years.

Mayhap, some gentle dame at last,
 Smit by the perils thou hast passed,
 However coy before,
 Shall bid thee now set up thy rest
 In that *Brest Harbour*, Woman's breast,
 And tempt the Fates no more.



ODE TO W. KITCHENER, M.D.*

Author of the Cook's Oracle—Observations on Vocal Music
 —The Art of Invigorating and Prolonging Life—Prac-
 tical Observations on Telescopes, Opera-Glasses, and
 Spectacles—The Housekeeper's Ledger—And the Plea-
 sures of Making a Will.

"I rule the roast, as Milton says!"—*Caleb Quotem.*

OH! multifarious man!
 Thou Wondrous, Admirable Kitchen Crichton;
 Born to enlighten
 The laws of Optics, Peptics, Music, Cooking—
 Master of the Piano—and the Pan—
 As busy with the kitchen as the skies!
 Now looking
 At some rich stew thro' Galileo's eyes—
 Or boiling eggs—timed to a metronome—
 As much at home

* Born 1775, died 1827.

In spectacles as in mere isinglass—
 In the art of frying brown—as a digression
 On music and poetical expression—
 Whereas, how few of all our cooks, alas !
 Could tell Calliope from “ Callipee ! ”

How few there be
 Could leave the lowest for the highest stories
 (Observatories,)

And turn, like thee, Diana's calculator,
 However *cook's* synonymous with *Kater* ! *

Alas ! still let me say,
 How few could lay
 The carving-knife beside the tuning-fork,
 Like the proverbial *Jack* ready for any work !

Oh, to behold thy features in thy book !
 Thy proper head and shoulders in a plate,
 How it would look !

With one raised eye watching the dial's date,
 And one upon the roast, gently cast down—
 Thy chops—done nicely brown—
 The garnished brow—with “ a few leaves of bay ”—
 The hair—“ done Wiggy's way ! ”

And still one studious finger near thy brains,
 As if thou were just come
 From editing some

New soup—or hashing Dibdin's cold remains !
 Or, Orpheus-like—fresh from thy dying strains
 Of music—Epping luxuries of sound,
 As Milton says, “ in many a bout
 Of linked sweetness long drawn out,”
 Whilst all thy tame stuffed leopards listened round !

* “ Captain Kater, the Moon's Surveyor.

Oh, rather thy whole length reveal,
(Standing like Fortune—on the jack—thy wheel
Thou art, like Fortune, full of chops and changes,
Thou hast a fillet too before thine eye !)
Scanning our kitchen and our vocal ranges,
As tho' it were the same to sing or fry—
Nay, so it is—hear how Miss Paton's throat
 Makes " fritters " of a note !
And how Tom Cook (Fryer and Singer born
 By name and nature), oh ! how night and morn
 He for the nicest public taste doth dish up
The good things from that *Pan* of music, Bishop !
And is not reading near akin to feeding,
 Or why should *Oxford Sausages* be fit
 Receptacles for wit ?
 Or why should Cambridge put its little, smart,
 Minced brains into a *T'art* ?
Nay, then, thou wert but wise to frame receipts,
 Book-treats,`
Equally to instruct the Cook and cram her—
 Receipts to be devoured, as well as read,
 The Culinary Art in gingerbread—
 The Kitchen's *Eaten Grammar* !

Oh, very pleasant is thy motley page—
 Ay, very pleasant in its chatty vein—
 So—in a kitchen—would have talked Montaigne,
That merry Gascon—humourist, and sage !
Let slender minds with single themes engage,
 Like Mr. Bowles with his eternal Pope—
Or Haydon on perpetual Haydon—or
 Hume on " Twice three make four,"
Or Lovelass upon wills—Thou goest on

Plaiting ten topics, like Tate Wilkinson !

Thy brain is like a rich Kaleidoscope,

Stuffed with a brilliant medley of odd bits,

And ever shifting on from change to change,

Saucepans — old Songs — Pills — Spectacles — and
Spits !

Thy range is wider than a Rumford Range !

Thy grasp a miracle !—till I recall

Th' indubitable cause of thy variety—

Thou art, of course, th' Epitome of all

That spying—frying—singing—mixed Society

Of Scientific Friends, who used to meet

Welsh Rabbits—and thyself—in Warren Street !

Oh, hast thou still those *Conversazioni*,*

Where learned visitors discoursed—and fed ?

There came Belzoni,

Fresh from the ashes of Egyptian dead—

And gentle Poki—and that Royal Pair,

Of whom thou didst declare—

“ Thanks to the greatest *Cooke* we ever read—

They were — what *Sandwiches* should be — half
bred ! ”

There famed M'Adam from his manual toil

Relaxed—and freely owned he took thy hints

On “ making *Broth* with *Flints* ”—

There Parry came and showed thee polar oil

For melted butter—Combe with his medullary

Notions about the *Skullery*,

And Mr. Poole, too partial to a broil—

* Dr. Kitchener's *conversazioni* were the resort of all the wits and celebrities of the day.

There witty Rogers came, that punning elf !

Who used to swear thy book

Would really look

A *Delphic* "Oracle," if laid on *Delf*—

There, once a month, came Campbell and discussed

His own—and thy own—" *Magazine of Taste* "—

There Wilberforce the Just

Came in his old black suit, till once he traced

Thy sly advice to *Poachers* of Black Folks,

That "do not break their *yolks*,"—

Which huffed him home, in grave disgust and haste !

There came John Clare, the poet, nor forbore

Thy *Patties*—thou wert hand-and-glove with Moore,

Who called thee "*Kitchen Addison*"—for why?

Thou givest rules for Health and Peptic Pills,

Forms for made dishes, and receipts for Wills,

" *Teaching us how to live and how to die !* "

There came thy Cousin-Cook, good Mrs. Fry—

There Trench, the Thames Projector, first brought on,

His sine *Quay* non—

There Martin would drop in on Monday eves,

Or Fridays, from the pens, and raise his breath

'Gainst cattle days and death—

Answered by Mellish, feeder of fat beeves,

Who swore that Frenchmen never could be eager

For fighting on soup *méagre*—

"And yet (as thou wouldst add) the French have seen

A Marshall *Tureen !* "

Great was thy Evening Cluster !—often graced

With Dollond—Burgess—and Sir Humphrey Davy !

'Twas there M'Dermot first inclined to Taste—

There Colburn learned the art of making paste

For Puffs—and Accum analysed a gravy,
 Colman—the Cutter of Coleman Street, 'tis said
 Came there—and Parkins with his Ex-wise-head,
 (His claim to letters)—Kater, too, the Moon's
 Crony—and Graham, lofty on balloons—
 There Croly stalked with holy humour heated,
 Who wrote a light horse play, which Yates com-
 pleted—

And Lady Morgan, that grinding organ,
 And Brasbridge telling anecdotes of spoons—
 Madame Valbrèque thrice honoured thee, and came
 With great Rossini, his own bow and fiddle—
 The Dibdins—Tom, Charles, Frognall—came with
 tuns

Of poor old books, old puns !

And even Irving spared a night from fame—
 And talked—till thou didst stop him in the middle,
 To serve round *Tewah-diddle*.*

Then all the guests rose up, and sighed good-bye !
 So let them :—thou thyself art still a *Host* !

Dibdin—Cornaro—Newton—Mrs. Fry !

Mrs. Glasse, Mr. Spec !—Lovell—and Weber,
 Mathews in Quot'em—Moore's fire-worshipping
 Gheber—

Thrice-worthy Worthy, seemed by thee engrossed !
 Howbeit the Peptic Cook still rules the roast,
 Potent to hush all ventriloquial snarling—
 And ease the bosom pangs of indigestion !

Thou art, sans question,
 The Corporation's love—its Doctor *Darling*
 Look at the Civic Palate—nay, the bed

* The Doctor's composition for a *night-cap*.

Which set dear Mrs. Opie on supplying
 “ Illustrations of *Lying!* ”
Ninety square feet of down from heel to head
 It measured, and I dread
Was haunted by that terrible night *Mare*
A monstrous burthen on the corporation !
Look at the Bill of Fare, for one day's share,
Sea-turtles by the score—Oxen by droves,
Geese, turkeys, by the flock—fishes and loaves
 Countless, as when the Lilliputian nation
Was making up the huge man-mountain's ration !

Oh ! worthy Doctor ! surely thou hast driven
The squatting demon from great Garratt's breast—
 His honour seemed to rest !—)
And what is thy reward ? Hath London given
Thee public thanks for thy important service ?
 Alas ! not even
The tokens it bestowed on Howe and Jervis !
Yet could I speak as Orators should speak
Before the worshipful the Common Council,
(Utter my bold bad grammar and pronounce ill,)
Thou shouldst not miss thy Freedom, for a week,
Richly engrossed on vellum :—Reason urges
That he who rules our cookery—that he
Who edits soups and gravies, ought to be
A *Citizen*, where sauce can make a *Burgess!*

ODE TO DR. KITCHENER.

II.

YE Muses nine inspire,
 And stir up my poetic fire ;
 Teach my burning soul to speak
 With a bubble and a squeak !
 Of Dr. Kitchener I fain would sing,
 Till pots, and pans, and mighty kettles ring

O culinary Sage !
 (I do not mean the herb in use,
 That always goes along with goose),
 How have I feasted on thy page !
 “ When like a lobster boiled, the morn
 From black to red began to turn,
 Till midnight, when I went to bed,
 And clapped my *tewah-diddle* on my head.

Who is there cannot tell
 Thou lead’st a life of living well ?
 “ What baron, or squire, or knight of the shire
 Lives half so well as a holy Fry-er ? ”

In doing well thou must be reckon’d
 The first, and Mrs. Fry the second ;
 And twice a Job—for in thy feverish toils
 Thou wast all over roasts, as well as boils.

Thou wast indeed no dunce
 To treat thy subjects and thyself at once.

Many a hungry poet eats
 His brains like thee,
 But few there be
 Could live so long on their receipts.

What living soul or sinner
Would slight thy invitation to a dinner,
Ought with the Danaïdes to dwell,
 Draw gravy in a cullender, and hear
 For ever in his ear
The pleasant tinkling of thy dinner bell.

Immortal Kitchener ! thy fame
Shall keep itself when Time makes game
Of other men's. Yea, it shall keep all weathers,
And thou shalt be upheld by the pen-feathers.
Yea, by the sauce of Michael Kelly,
 Thy name shall perish never,
 But be magnified for ever,
By all whose eyes are bigger than their belly !

Yea, till the world is done
To a turn, and Time puts out the Sun,
Shall live the endless echo of thy name.
But as for thy more fleshy frame,
Oh, Death's carnivorous teeth will tittle
Thee out of breath, and eat it for cold victual.
But still thy fame shall be among the nations
Preserved to the last course of generations.

Ah, me ! my soul is touched with sorrow
To think how flesh must pass away ;
So mutton that is warm to-day
Is cold and turned to hashes on the morrow !
 Farewell ; I would say more, but I
 Have other fish to fry.



ODE TO THE ADVOCATES FOR THE
REMOVAL OF SMITHFIELD MARKET.

“Sweeping our flocks and herds.”—*Douglas*.

O PHILANTHROPIC men !

For this address I need not make apology—
Who aim at clearing out the Smithfield pen,
And planting further off its vile Zoology—

Permit me thus to tell,

I like your efforts well,

For routing that great nest of Hornithology !

Be not dismayed, although repulsed at first,
And driven from their Horse, and Pig, and Lamparts,
Charge on !—you shall upon their hornworks burst,
And carry all their *Bull*-warks and their *Ram*-parts.

Go on, ye wholesale drovers !

And drive away the Smithfield flocks and herds !

As wild as Tartar-Curds,

That come so fat, and kicking, from their clovers ;
Off with them all !—those restive brutes, that vex
Our streets, and plunge, and lunge, and butt, and
battle ;

And save the female sex

From being cowed—like Iö—by the cattle !

Fancy—when droves appear on
The hill of Holborn, roaring from its top,—
Your ladies—ready, as they own, to drop,
Taking themselves to Thomson's with a *Fear-on* !

Or, in St. Martin's Lane,
Scared by a bullock, in a frisky vein,—

Fancy the terror of your timid daughters,
 While rushing souse
 Into a coffee-house,
 To find it—Slaughter's !

Or fancy this :—

Walking along the street, some stranger miss,
 Her head with no such thought of danger laden,
 When suddenly 'tis "Aries Taurus Virgo !"
 You don't know Latin, I translate it ergo,
 Into your Areas a Bull throws the Maiden !

Think of some poor old crone
 Treated, just like a penny, with a toss !
 At that vile spot now grown
 So generally known
 For making a Cow Cross !

Nay, fancy your own selves far off from stall,
 Or shed, or shop—and that an Ox infuriate
 Just pins you to the wall,
 Giving you a strong dose of *Oxy-Muriate* !

Methinks I hear the neighbours that live round
 The Market-ground
 Thus make appeal unto their civic fellows—
 "'Tis well for you that live apart—unable
 To hear this brutal Babel,
 But our *firesides* are troubled with their *bellows*."

"Folks that too freely sup
 Must e'en put up
 With their own troubles if they can't digest ;
 But we must needs regard
 The case as hard
 That *others'* victuals should disturb our rest,

That from our sleep *your* food should start and
jump us !

We like, ourselves, a steak,

But, sirs, for pity's sake !

We don't want oxen at our doors to *rump us* !

“ If we *do* doze—it really is too bad !

We constantly are roared awake or rung,

Through bullocks mad

That run in all the ‘ Night Thoughts ’ of our Young ! ”

Such are the woes of sleepers—now let's take

The woes of those that wish to keep *a Wake* !

Oh, think ! when Wombwell gives his annual feasts,

Think of these “ Bulls of Basan,” far from mild ones !

Such fierce tame beasts,

That nobody much cares to see the wild ones !

Think of the Show woman, “ what shows a Dwarf, ”

Seeing a red Cow come

To swallow her Tom Thumb,

And forced with broom of birch to keep her off !

Think, too, of Messrs. Richardson & Co.,

When looking at their public private boxes,

To see in a back row

Three live sheep's heads, a porker's and an Ox's !

Think of their Orchestra, when two horns come

Through, to accompany the double drum !

Or, in the midst of murder and remorse,

Just when the Ghost is certain,

A great rent in the curtain,

And enter two tall skeletons—of Horses !

Great Philanthropics ! pray urge these topics

Upon the Solemn Council of the Nation,

Get a Bill soon, and give, some noon,
 The Bulls, a Bull of Excommunication !
 Let the old Fair have fair-play as its right,
 And to each show and sight
 Ye shall be treated with a Free List latitude ;
 To Richardson's Stage Dramas,
 Dio—and Cosmo—ramas,
 Giants and Indians wild,
 Dwarf, Sea Bear, and Fat Child,
 And that most rare of Shows—a Show of Gratitude !



ODE TO THE CAMELOPARD.

WELCOME to Freedom's birthplace—and a den !
 Great Anti-climax, hail !
 So very lofty in thy front—but then,
 So dwindling at the tail !
 In truth, thou hast the most unequal legs !
 Has one pair galloped, whilst the other trotted,
 Along with other brethren, leopard-spotted.
 O'er Afric sand, where ostriches lay eggs ?
 Sure thou wert caught in some hard uphill chase,
 'Those hinder heels still keeping thee in check !
 And yet thou seem'st prepared in any case,
 Tho' they had lost the race,
 To win it—by a neck !

That lengthy neck—how like a crane's it looks !
 Art thou the overseer of all the brutes ?
 Or dost thou browse on tip-top leaves or fruits—
 Or go a bird-nesting amongst the rooks ?

How kindly Nature caters for all wants ;
Thus giving unto thee a neck that stretches,
And high food fetches—
To some a long nose, like the elephant's !

Oh ! had'st thou any organ to thy bellows,
To turn thy breath to speech in human style,
What secrets thou might'st tell us,
Where now our scientific guesses fail ;
For instance of the Nile,

Whether those Seven Mouths have any tail.

Mayhap thy luck too,
From that high head, as from a lofty hill,
Has let thee see the marvellous Timbuctoo—
Or drink of Niger at its infant rill ;
What were the travels of our Major Denham,
Or Clapperton, to thine
In that same line,

If thou could'st only squat thee down and pen 'em !

Strange sights, indeed, thou must have overlooked,
With eyes held ever in such vantage-stations !

Hast seen, perchance, unhappy white folks cooked,
And then made free of negro corporations ?

Poor wretches saved from castaway three-deckers—

By sooty wreckers—

From hungry waves to have a loss still drearier,
To far exceed the utmost aim of Park—

And find themselves, alas ! beyond the mark,
In the *insides* of Africa's interior !

Live on, Giraffe ! genteelest of raff kind !—

Admired by noble and by royal tongues !

May no pernicious wind,
Or English fog, blight thy exotic lungs !

Live on in happy peace, altho' a rarity,
Nor envy thy poor cousin's more outrageous
Parisian popularity—
Whose very leopard-rash is grown contagious,
And worn on gloves and ribbons all about,
Alas ! they'll wear him out !—
So thou shalt take thy sweet diurnal feeds—
When he is stuffed with undigested straw,
Sad food that never visited his jaw !
And staring round him with a brace of beads !



REMONSTRATORY ODE

FROM THE ELEPHANT AT EXETER 'CHANGE, TO
MR. MATHEWS, AT THE ENGLISH OPERA-
HOUSE.

“ See with what courteous action
He beckons you to a more removed ground.”—*Hamlet*.

[*Written by a Friend.*]

I.

OH, Mr Mathews ! Sir !
(If a plain elephant may speak his mind,
And that I have a mind to speak I find
By my inward stir)
I long have thought, and wished to say, that we
Mar our well-merited prosperity
By being such near neighbours ;
My keeper now hath lent me pen and ink,
Shoved in my truss of lunch, and tub of drink
And left me to my labours.

The whole menagerie is in repose,
 The Coatamundi is in his Sunday clothes.
 Watching the Lynx's most unnatural doze ;
 The Panther is asleep and the Macaw ;
 The Lion is engaged on something raw ;
 The White Bear cools his chin
 'Gainst the wet tin ;
 And the confined old Monkey's in the straw.
 All the nine little Lionets are lying
 Slumbering in milk, and sighing ;
 Miss Cross is sipping ox-tail soup,
 In her front coop,
 So here's the happy mid-day moment :—yes,
 I seize it, Mr. Mathews, to address
 A word or two
 To you
 On the subject of the ruin which must come
 By both being in the Strand, and both at home
 On the same nights ; two treats
 So very near each other,
 As, O my brother !
 To play old gooseberry with both receipts.

II.

When you begin
 Your summer fun, three times a week, at eight,
 And carriages roll up, and cits roll in.
 I feel a change in Exeter 'Change's change.
 And, dash my trunk, I hate
 To ring my bell, when you ring yours, and go
 With a diminished glory through *my* show !
 It is most strange ;

But crowds that meant to see me eat a stack,
 And sip a water-butt or so, and crack
 A root of mangel-wurzel with my foot,
 Eat little children's fruit,
 Pick from the floor small coins,
 And then turn slowly round and show my India-
 rubber loins :
 'Tis strange—most strange, but true,
 That these same crowds seek *you* !
 Pass *my* abode, and pay at *your* next door ;
 It makes me roar
 With anguish when I think of this ; I go
 With sad severity my nightly rounds
 Before one poor front row,
 My fatal funny foe !
 And when I stoop, as duty bids, I sigh
 And feel that, while poor elephantine I
 Pick up a sixpence, you pick up the pounds !

III.

Could you not go?
 Could you not take the Coburg or the Surrey?
 Or Sadler's Wells—(I'm not in a hurry,
 I never am!) for the next season?—oh !
 Woe ! woe ! woe !
 To both of us, if we remain ; for not
 In silence will I bear my altered lot,
 To have you merry, sir, at my expense !
 No man of any sense,
 No true great person (and we both are great
 In our own ways) would tempt another's fate.

I would myself depart
 In Mr. Cross's cart ;
 But, like Othello, " am not easily moved."

There's a nice house in Tottenham Court, they say,
 Fit for a single gentleman's small play ;
 And more conveniently near your home :
 You'll easily go and come.

Or get a room in the City—in some street—
 Coachmaker's Hall, or the Paul's Head,
 Cateaton Street ;
 Any large place, in short, in which to get your bread ;
 But do not stay, and get
 Me into the Gazette !

IV.

 Ah ! The Gazette ;
 I press my forehead with my trunk, and wet
 My tender cheek with elephantine tears,
 Shed of a walnut size
 From my wise eyes,
 To think of ruin after prosperous years.
 What a dread case would be
 For me—large me !
 To meet at Basinghall Street, the first and seventh
 And the eleventh !
 To undergo (D————n !)
 My last examination !
 To cringe and to surrender,
 Like a criminal offender,
 All my effects—my bell-pull, and my bell,
 My bolt, my stock of hay, my new deal cell.

To *post* my ivory, sir !
 And have some curious commissioner
 Very irreverently search my trunk ;
 'Sdeath ! I should die
 With rage, to find a tiger in possession
 Of my abode ; up to his yellow knees
 In my old straw ; and my profound profession
 Entrusted to two beasts of assignees !

V.

The truth is simply this,—if you *will* stay
 Under my very nose,
 Filling your rows
 Just at my feeding time, to see *your* play,
 My mind's made up,
 No more at nine I sup,
 Except on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Sundays,
 From eight to eleven,
 As I hope for heaven,
 On Thursdays, and on Saturdays, and Mondays,
 I'll squeak and roar, and grunt without cessation,
 And utterly confound your recitation.
 And, mark me ! all my friends of the furry snout
 Shall join a chorus shout,
 We will be heard—we'll spoil
 Your wicked ruination toil.
 Insolvency must ensue
 To you, sir, you ;
 Unless you move your opposition shop,
 And let me stop.

VI.

I have no more to say :—I do not write
 In anger, but in sorrow ; I must look
 However to my interests every night,
 And they detest your “ Memorandum-book.”
 If we could join our forces—I should like it ;
 You do the dialogue, and I the songs,
 A voice to me belongs.
 (The Editors of the *Globe* and *Traveller* ring
 With praises of it, when I hourly sing
 God save the King,)
 If such a bargain could be schemed I’d strike it !
 I think, too, I could do the Welsh old man
 In the Youthful Days, if dressed upon your plan ;
 And the attorney in your Paris trip,—
 I’m large about the hip !
 Now think of this !—for we cannot go on
 As next-door rivals, that my mind declares.
 I must be penniless, or you be gone !
 We must live separate, or else have shares.
 I am a friend or foe
 As you take this ;
 Let me your profitable hubbub miss,
 Or be it “ Mathews, Elephant, & Co. ! ”



ODE TO ST. SWITHIN.

“ The rain it raineth every day.”

THE dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
 On every window-frame hang beaded damps
 Like rows of small illumination lamps
 To celebrate the Jubilee of Showers !

A constant sprinkle patters from all leaves,
The very Dryads are not dry, but soppers,
And from the Houses' eaves
Tumble eaves-droppers.

The hundred clerks that live along the street,
Bondsmen to mercantile and city schemers,
With squashing, sloshing, and galloshing feet,
Go paddling, paddling, through the wet, like
steamers,
Each hurrying to earn the daily stipend—
Umbrellas pass of every shade of green,
And now and then a crimson one is seen,
Like an umbrella *ripened*.

Over the way a waggon
Stands with six smoking horses, shrinking, blinking,
While in the George and Dragon
The man is keeping himself dry—and drinking !
The butcher's boy skulks underneath his tray ;
Hats shine—shoes don't—and down droop
collars,
And one blue Parasol cries all the way,
To school, in company with four small scholars !

Unhappy is the man to-day who rides,
Making his journey sloppier, not shorter ;
Ah, there they go, a dozen of outsides,
Performing on a " stage with real water ! "
A dripping pauper crawls along the way,
The only real willing out-of-doorer.
And says, or seems to say,
" Well, I am poor enough—but here's a *pourer* ! "

The scene in water colours thus I paint,
Is your own festival, you Sloppy Saint !
Mother of all the Family of Rainers !

Saint of the Soakers !

Making all people croakers,
Like frogs in swampy marshes, and complainers !
And why you mizzle forty days together,
Giving the earth your water-soup to sup,
I marvel—why such wet, mysterious weather ?
I wish you'd *clear it up* !

Why cast such cruel dampers
On pretty Picnics, and against all wishes
Set the cold ducks a-swimming in the hampers,
And volunteer, unasked, to wash the dishes ?
Why drive the Nymphs from the selected spot,
To cling like ladybirds around a tree—
Why spoil a Gipsy party at their tea,
By throwing your cold water upon hot ?

Cannot a rural maiden, or a man,
Seek Hornsey Wood by invitation, sipping
Their green with Pan,
But souse you come, and show their Pan all dripping !
Why upon snow-white tablecloths and sheets,
That do not wait, or want a second washing,
Come squashing ?
Why task yourself to lay the dust in streets,
As if there were no water-cart contractors,
No potboys spilling beer, no shopboys ruddy
Spoonng out puddles muddy,
Milkmaids, and other slopping benefactors ?

A Queen you are, raining in your own right,
Yet, oh ! how little flattered by report !

Even by those that seek the Court,
Pelted with every term of spleen and spite.
Folks rail and swear at you in every place ;
They say you are a creature of no bowel ;
They say you're always washing Nature's face,
And that you then supply her

With nothing drier
Than some old wringing cloud by way of towel !
The whole town wants you ducked, just as you duck it,
They wish you on your own mud porridge suppered,
They hope that you may kick your own big bucket,
Or in your water-butt go souse ! heels up'ard !
They are, in short, so weary of your drizzle,
They'd spill the water in your veins to stop it—
Be warned ! You are too partial to a mizzle—
Pray *drop it !*



ODE TO M. BRUNEL.*

“ Well said, old mole ! canst work i' the earth so fast ? a
worthy pioneer ! ”—*Hamlet*.

WELL !—Monsieur Brunel,
How prospers now thy mighty undertaking,
To join by a hollow way the Bankside friends
Of Rotherhithe and Wapping—
Never be stopping,
But poking, groping, in the dark keep making
An archway, underneath the Dabs and Gudgeons,
For Collier men and pitchy old Curmudgeons,

* The architect of the Tunnel under the Thames.

To cross the water in inverse proportion,
 Walk under steamboats under the keel's ridge,
 To keep down all extortion,
 And without sculls to diddle London Bridge !

In a fresh hunt, a new Great Bore to worry,
 Thou didst to earth thy human terriers follow,
 Hopeful at last from Middlesex to Surrey,
 To give us the "View Hollow."

In short it was thy aim, right north and south,
 To put a pipe into old Thames's mouth,
 Alas ! half-way thou hadst proceeded, when
 Old Thames, through roof, not water-proof,
 Came, like "a tide in the affairs of men ;"
 And with a mighty stormy kind of roar,

Reproachful of thy wrong,
 Burst out in that old song

Of Incledon's, beginning "Cease, rude Bore."
 Sad is it, worthy of one's tears,

Just when one seems the most successful,
 To find one's self o'er head and ears
 In difficulties most distressful !

Other great speculations have been nursed,
 Till want of proceeds laid them on a shelf ;
 But thy concern was at the worst,

When it began to *liquidate* itself !
 But now Dame Fortune has her false face hidden,
 And languishes thy Tunnel—so to paint,
 Under a slow incurable complaint,
 Bed-ridden !

Why, when thus Thames—bed-bothered—why
 repine !
 Do try a spare bed at the Serpentine !

Yet let none think thee dazed, or crazed, or stupid ;
 And sunk beneath thy own and Thames's craft ;
 Let them not style thee some Mechanic Cupid
 Pining and pouting o'er a broken shaft !
 I'll tell thee with thy Tunnel what to do ;
 Light up thy boxes, build a bin or two,
 The wine does better than such water trades :
 Stick up a sign—the sign of the Bore's Head ;
 I've drawn it ready for thee in black lead,
 And make thy cellar subterrane—Thy Shades !



ODE FOR ST. CECILIA'S EVE.

“ Look out for squalls.”—*The Pilot.*

O COME, dear Barney Isaacs, come,
 Punch for one night can spare his drum
 As well as pipes of Pan !
 Forget not, Popkins, your bassoon,
 Nor, Mister Bray, your horn, as soon
 As you can leave the Van ;
 Blind Billy, bring your violin ;
 Miss Crow, you're great in Cherry Ripe !
 And Chub, your viol must drop in
 Its bass to Soger Tommy's pipe.
 Ye butchers, bring your bones :
 An organ would not be amiss ;
 If grinding Jim has spouted his,
 Lend yours, good Mister Jones.
 Do, hurdy-gurdy Jenny—do
 Keep sober for an hour or two,

Music's charms to help to paint.
And, Sandy Gray, if you should not
Your bagpipes bring—O tuneful Scot !
Conceive the feelings of the Saint !

Miss Strummel issues an invite,
For music, and turn-out to-night
In honour of Cecilia's session ;
But ere you go, one moment stop,
And with all kindness let me drop
A hint to you and your profession ;
Imprimis then : Pray keep within
The bounds to which your skill was born ;

Let the one-handed let alone

Trombone,

Don't—Rheumatiz ! seize the violin,
Or Ashmy snatch the horn !

Don't ever to such rows give birth,
As if you had no end on earth,
Except to "wake the lyre ;"
Don't "strike the harp," pray never do,
Till others long to strike it too,
Perpetual harping's apt to tire ;
Oh I have heard such flat-and-sharpers,
I've blest the head
Of good King Ned,
For scragging all those old Welsh Harpers !

Pray, never, ere each tuneful doing,
Take a prodigious deal of wooing ;
And then sit down to thrum the strain,
As if you'd never rise again—

The least Cecilia-like of things ;
Remember that the saint has wings.
I've known Miss Strummel pause an hour,
Ere she could " Pluck the Fairest Flower.
Yet without hesitation, she
Plunged next into the " Deep, Deep Sea."
When on the keys she *does* begin,
Such awful torments soon you share,
She really seems like Milton's " Sin,"
Holding the keys of—you know where !

Never tweak people's ears so toughly,
That urchin-like they can't help saying—
" O dear, O dear—you call this playing,
But oh, it's playing very roughly !"
Oft, in the ecstasy of pain,
I've cursed all instrumental workmen,
Wished Broadwood Thurtelled in a lane,
And Kirk White's fate to every Kirkman—
I really once delighted spied
" Clementi Collard in Cheapside."

Another word—don't be surprised
Revered and ragged street musicians,
You have been only half baptized,
And each name proper, or improper,
Is not the value of a copper,
Till it has had the due additions,

Husky, Rusky,
Ninny, Tinny,
Hummel, Bummel,
Bowsky, Wowsky,

All these are very good selectables ;

But none of your plain pudding-and-tames—
Folks that are called the hardest names

Are music's most respectables.

Ev'ry woman, ev'ry man,

Look as foreign as you can,

Don't cut your hair, or wash your skin,

Make ugly faces and begin.

Each dingy Orpheus gravely hears.

And now to show they understand it !

Miss Crow her scrannel throttle clears,

And all the rest prepare to band it.

Each scraper right for concertante,

Rozins the hair of Rozinante :

Then all sound A, if they know which,

That they may join like birds in June ;

Jack Tar alone neglects to tune,

For he's all over concert-pitch.

A little prelude goes before,

Like a knock and ring at music's door,

Each instrument gives in its name :

Then sitting in

They all begin

To play a musical round game.

Scrapenberg, as the eldest hand,

Leads a first fiddle to the band,

A second follows suit ;

Anon the ace of horns comes plump

On the two fiddles with a trump,

Puffindorf plays a flute.

This sort of musical revoke,

The grave bassoon begins to smoke,

And in rather grumpy kind
Of tone begins to speak his mind ;
The double drum is next to mix,
Playing the Devil on Two Sticks—
 Clamour, clamour,
 Hammer, hammer,
While now and then a pipe is heard,
Insisting to put in a word,
 With all his shrilly best,
So to allow the little minion
Time to deliver his opinion,
 They take a few bars rest.

Well, little pipe begins—with sole
And small voice going thro' the *hole*,
 Beseeching,
 Preaching,
 Squealing,
 Appealing,
Now as high as he can go
Now in language rather low,
And having done—begins once more,
Verbatim what he said before.
This twiddling, twaddling sets on fire,
All the old instrumental ire,
And fiddles for explosion ripe,
Put out the little squeaker's pipe ;
This wakes bass viol—and viol for that,
Seizing on innocent little B flat,
Shakes him like terrier shaking a rat—
 They all seem miching malico !
To judge from a rumble unawares,
The drum has had a pitch downstairs :

And the trumpet rash,
By a violent crash,
Seems splitting somebody's calico !
The viol too groans in deep distress,
As if he suddenly grew sick ;
And one rapid fiddle sets off express,—
 Hurrying,
 Scurrying,
 Spattering,
 Clattering,
To fetch him a Doctor of Music.
This tumult sets the Haut-boy crying,
Beyond the Piano's pacifying,
 The Cymbal
 Gets nimble,
 Triangle
 Must wrangle,
The band is becoming most martial of bands,
 When just in the middle,
 A quakerly fiddle,
Proposes a general shaking of hands !
 Quaking,
 Shaking,
 Quivering,
 Shivering,
Long bow—short bow—each bow drawing :
Some like filing—some like sawing ;
At last these agitations cease,
 And they all get
 The flageolet
To breathe " a piping time of peace."

Ah, too deceitful charm,
Like lightning before death,

For Scrapenberg to rest his arm,
 And Puffindorf get breath !
 Again without remorse or pity,
 They play " The Storming of a City,"
 Miss S. herself composed and planned it—
 When lo ! at this renewed attack,
 Up jumps a little man in black,—
 " The very Devil cannot stand it !"

And with that,
 Snatching hat,
 (Not his own,)
 Off is flown,
 Thro' the door,
 In his black,
 To come back,

Never, never, never more !

O Music ! praises thou hast had,
 From Dryden and from Pope,
 For thy good notes, yet none I hope,
 But I, e'er praised the bad,
 Yet are not saint and sinner even ?
 Miss Strummel on Cecilia's level ?
 One drew an angel down from heaven !
 The other scared away the Devil !



ODE TO MADAME HENGLER.

FIREWORK-MAKER TO VAUXHALL.

OH, Mrs. Hengler !—Madame,—I beg pardon,
 Starry Enchantress of the Surrey Garden !

Accept an ode not meant as any scoff—
The Bard were bold indeed at thee to quiz,
Whose Squibs are far more popular than his ;
Whose works are much more certain to go off.

Great is thy fame, but not a silent fame ;
With many a bang the public ear it courts ;
And yet thy arrogance we never blame,
But take thy merits from thy own reports.
Thou hast indeed the most indulgent backers.
We make no doubting, misbelieving comments,
Even in thy most bounceable of moments ;
But lend our ears implicit to thy crackers !—
Strange helps to thy applause too are not missing
 Thy Rockets raise thee,
 And Serpents praise thee,
As none beside are ever praised—by hissing :

Mistress of Hydropyrics,
Of glittering Pindarics, Sapphics, Lyrics,
Professor of a Fiery Necromancy,
Oddly thou charmest the politer sorts
 With midnight sports,
Partaking very much of *flash* and *fancy*!

What thoughts had shaken all
In olden time at thy nocturnal revels,
 Each brimstone ball
They would have deemed an eyeball of the Devil's !
But now thy flaming Meteors cause no fright ;
A modern Hubert to the royal ear,
 Might whisper without fear,
“ My Lord, they say there were five moons to-night ! ”

Nor would it raise one superstitious notion
To hear the whole description fairly out :—
“ One fixed—which t’other four whirled round about
With wondrous motion.”

Such are the very sights
Thou workest, Queen of Fire, on earth and heaven,
Between the hours of midnight and eleven,
Turning our English to Arabian Nights,
With blazing mounts, and founts, and scorching
dragons,
Blue stars and white,
And blood-red light,
And dazzling Wheels fit for Enchanters’ waggons.
Thrice lucky woman ! doing things that be
With other folks past benefit of parson ;
For burning, no Burn’s Justice falls on thee,
Altho’ night after night the public see
Thy Vauxhall palaces all end in Arson !

Sure thou wast never born,
Like old Sir Hugh, with water in thy head,
Nor lectured night and morn
Of sparks and flames to have an awful dread,
Allowed by a prophetic dam and sire
To play with fire.
O didst thou never, in those days gone by,
Go carrying about—no schoolboy prouder—
Instead of waxen doll a little Guy ;
Or in thy pretty pyrotechnic vein,
Up the parental pig-tail lay a train,
To let off all his powder ?

Full of the wildfire of thy youth,
Didst never, in plain truth,
Plant whizzing Flowers in thy mother's pots,
Turning the garden into powder plots?

Or give the cook, to fright her,
Thy paper sausages well stuffed with nitre?
Nay, wert thou never guilty, now, of dropping
A lighted cracker by thy sister's Dear,
So that she could not hear
The question he was popping?

Go on, Madame! Go on—be bright and busy
While hoaxed astronomers look up and stare
From tall observatories, dumb and dizzy,
To see a Squib in Cassiopeia's Chair!
A Serpent wriggling into Charles's Wain!
A Roman Candle lighting the Great Bear!
A Rocket tangled in Diana's train,
And Crackers stuck in Berenice's Hair!

There is a King of Fire—Thou shouldst be Queen!
Methinks a good connexion might come from it;
Couldst thou not make him, in the garden scene,
Set out per Rocket and return per Comet;

Then give him a hot treat
Of Pyrotechnicals to sit and sup,
Lord! how the world would throng to see him eat,
He swallowing Fire, while thou dost throw it up!

One solitary night—true is the story,
Watching those forms that Fancy will create
Within the bright confusion of the grate,
I saw a dazzling countenance of glory!

O Dei gratias !
 That fiery facias,
 'Twas thine, Enchantress of the Surrey Grove ;
 And ever since that night,
 In dark and bright,
 Thy face is *registered* within my stove !

Long may that starry brow enjoy its rays,
 May no untimely *blow* its doom forestall ;
 But when old age prepares the friendly pall,
 When the last spark of all thy sparks decays,
 Then die lamented by good people all,
 Like Goldsmith's *Madam Blaize* !



ODE TO MR. MALTHUS.

MY DEAR, do pull the bell,
 And pull it well,
 And send these noisy children all upstairs,—
 Now playing here like bears—
 You George, and William, go into the grounds,
 Charles, James, and Bob are there,—and take your
 string,
 Drive horses, or fly kites, or anything,
 You're quite enough to play at hare and hounds,—
 You little May, and Caroline, and Poll,
 Take each your doll,
 And go, my dears, into the two back pair,
 Your sister Margaret's there—
 Harriet and Grace, thank God, are both at school,
 At far off Ponty Pool—

I want to read, but really can't get on—
Let the four twins, Mark, Matthew, Luke and John,
Go—to their nursery—go—I never can
Enjoy my Malthus among such a clan !

Oh, Mr. Malthus, I agree
In everything I read with thee !
The world's too full, there is no doubt,
And wants a deal of thinning out,—
It's plain—as plain as Harrow's steeple—
And I agree with some thus far,
Who say the King's too popular,
That is,—he has too many people.

There are too many of all trades,
Too many bakers,
Too many everything makers,
But not too many undertakers,—
Too many boys,—
Too many hobby-de-hoys,—
Too many girls, men, widows, wives, and maids,—
There is a dreadful surplus to demolish.

And yet some wrongheads,
With thick not long heads,
Poor metaphysicians !

Sign petitions
Capital punishment to abolish ;
And in the face of censuses such vast ones
New hospitals contrive,
For keeping life alive,
Laying first stones, the dolts ! instead of last ones
Others, again, in the same contrariety,
Deem that of all Humane Society
They really do deserve the thanks,

Because the two banks of the Serpentine,
By their design,
Are Saving Banks.
Oh ! were it given but to me to weed
The human breed,
And root out here and there some cumbering elf,
I think I could go through it,
And really do it,
With profit to the world and to myself.
For instance, the unkind among the Editors,—
My debtors, those I mean to say
Who cannot or who will not pay,
And all my creditors
These for my own sake I'd destroy ;
But for the world's, and every one's,
I'd hoe up Mrs G——'s two sons,
And Mrs. B——'s big little boy,
Call'd only by herself an " only joy."
As Mr. Irving's chapel not too full,
Himself alone I'd pull—
But for the peace of years that have to run,
I'd make the Lord Mayor's a perpetual station,
And put a period to rotation,
By rooting up all Aldermen but one,—
These are but hints what good might thus be
done ;
But, ah ! I fear the public good
Is little by the public understood,—
For instance—if with flint, and steel, and tinder,
Great Swing, for once a philanthropic man,
Proposed to throw a light upon the plan,
No doubt some busy fool would hinder
His burning all the Foundling to a cinder.

Or, if the Lord Mayor, on an Easter Monday
That wine and bun day
Proposed to poison all the little Blue-Coats,
Before they died by bite or sup, .
Some meddling marplot would blow up,
Just at the moment critical,
The economy political
Of saving their fresh yellow plush and new coats.

Equally 'twould be undone,
Suppose the Bishop of London,
On that great day,
In June or May,
When all the large small family of charity,
Brown, black, or carrotty,
Walk in their dusty parish shoes,
In too, too many two-and-twos,
To sing together till they scare the walls
Of old St. Paul's,
Sitting in red, grey, green, blue, drab, and white,
Some say a gratifying sight,
Tho' I think sad—but that's a schism—
To witness so much pauperism—
Suppose, I say, the Bishop then, to make
In this poor over-crowded world more room,
Proposed to shake
Down that immense extinguisher, the dome—
Some humane Martin in the charity Gal-way,
I fear would come and interfere,
Save beadle, brat and overseer,
To walk back in their parish shoes,
In too, too many two-and-twos
Islington—Wapping—or Pall Mall way !

Thus, people hatch'd from goose's egg,
Foolishly think a pest, a plague.
And in its face their doors all shut,
On hinges oil'd with cajeput—
Drugging themselves with drams well spiced and
 cloven,

 And turning pale as linen rags
 At hoisting up of yellow flags,
While you and I are crying "Orange Boven!"
Why should we let precautions so absorb us,
Or trouble shipping with a quarantine—
When, if I understand the thing you mean,
We ought to import the Cholera Morbus!

THE END.

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